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EDUCATION SUPPORT EDITION
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ESP

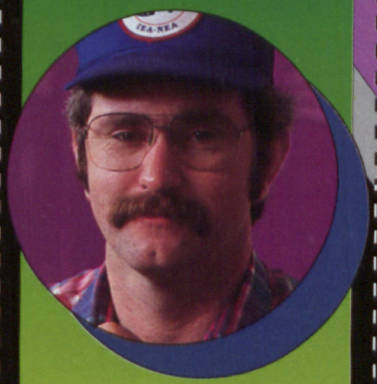
EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

What We Do

Why We're Proud

What We Want

What We Earn



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On the cover: Carmen Martinez Gonzales, New Mexico; Genevieve Smith, Pennsylvania; Ted Quinlan, Montana; Pat Lemster, Colorado.

GCIU

It's official: roughly one out of every 10 NEA members is an education support worker. Now well above 201,000, NEA support staff membership has climbed by over 19,000 in the past year alone. These growing numbers mean stronger locals, more clout in the community, and more power in politics—at every level.

Today, all across the country, support staff and teachers are standing shoulder-to-shoulder more and more frequently—and getting better acquainted in the process. This joint action isn't always easy, but it's happening. And it's paying off in respect: at work, at the bargaining table, at the polls.

In the following pages, you'll see still other ways NEA support staff members are earning that respect. You'll read about an instructional assistant who's become an expert at comforting disaster-stricken kids, a custodian who helped redesign a school, a support staff that bid against private contractors—and won!

We think the pages ahead offer an informative—and inspiring—look at the work NEA support staff members do, both on and off the job. And you just may find an idea you'll want to take to work with you.

Jane Power, *editor*

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A wide-ranging look at the on-the-job concerns, new and old, of NEA support staff members.

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Support staffers the nation over are caring about others, taking on new challenges, inventing new solutions, and having fun. Check 'em out!

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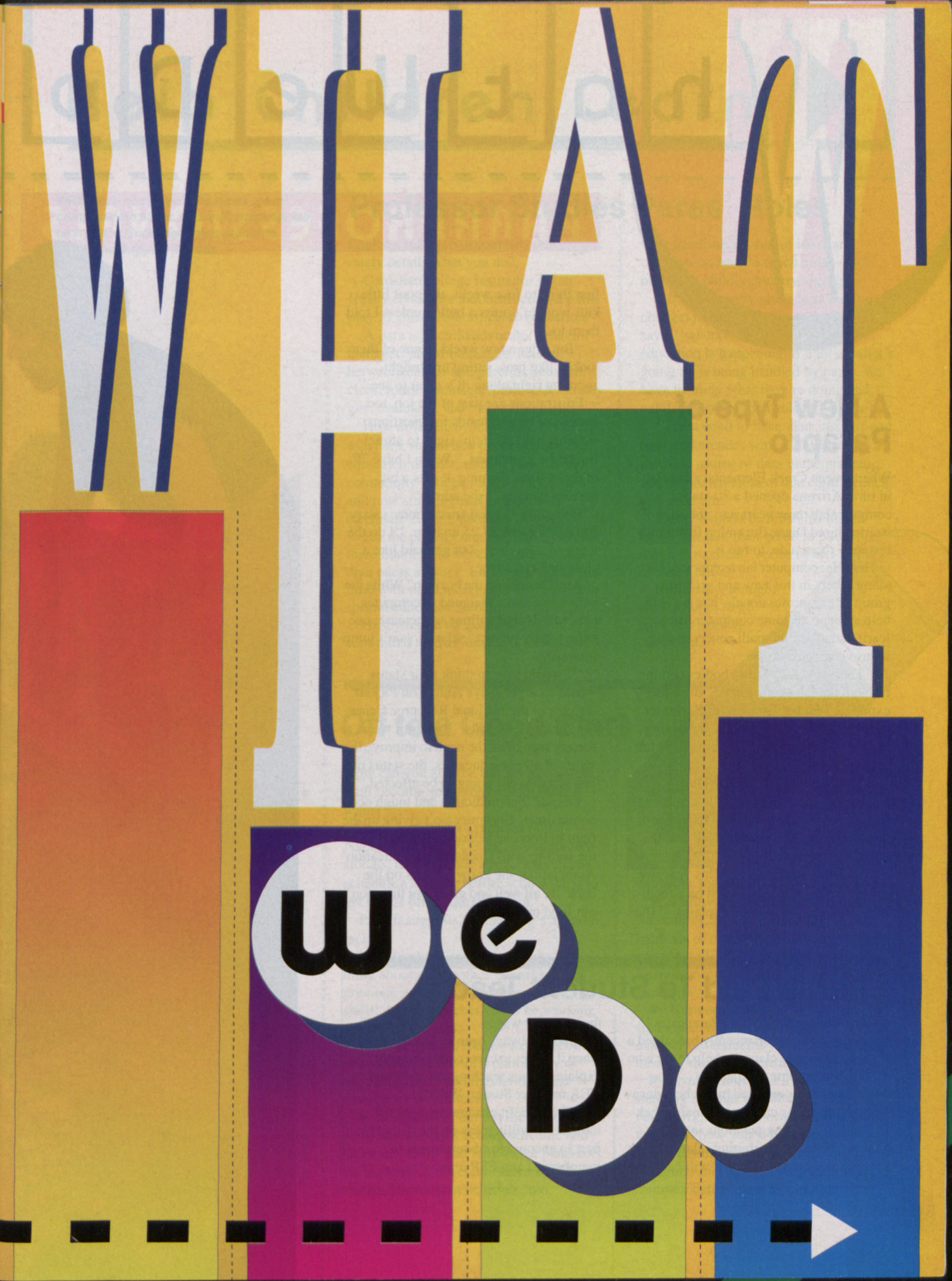
NEA

SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERSHIP 1979-2000

WHAT

we Do



What We Do

PARAPROFESSIONALS

A New Type of Parapro

When Queen Creek Elementary School in rural Arizona opened a 30-station computer lab three years ago, the administration hired Diane Burkmier, formerly a resource room aide, to run it.

Her title: computer lab technician. Like many others in this new and growing group of paraprofessionals, her job is to help students become computer literate, learn language and math concepts, and improve writing skills.

"There are 1,200 little bodies coming through the lab every week," Burkmier explains. Teachers work with Burkmier to select appropriate lessons, then bring their classes in for 60 to 90 minutes of lab time each week.

"The best thing about my job," Burkmier says, "is that I'm in charge. Teachers trust my judgment. Parents ask me questions. And students call me 'the computer teacher.'"

Rewards can be great. "This year, we got the kindergartners started on a readiness package," Burkmier explains. "The first three to four weeks, the poor little kids wouldn't press a button unless I told them to.

"But after a few weeks, some of them looked like pros, sitting up straight, zooming right along. It's great to see."

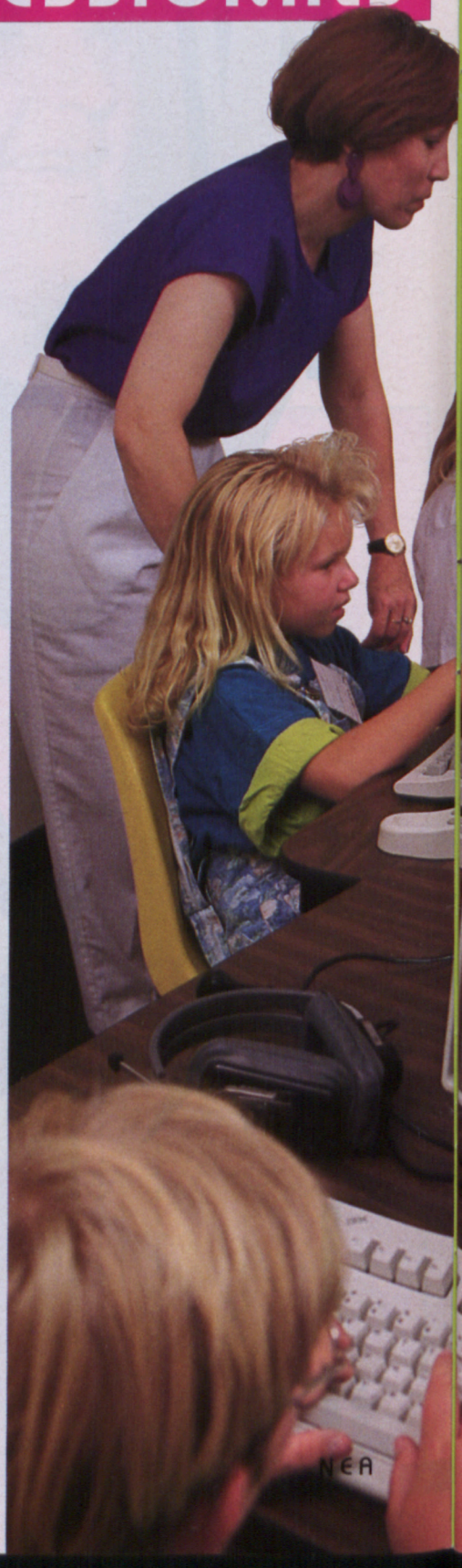
Frustrations are part of the job, too. Instead of raising hands for questions, students hold up *Help!* signs to attract Burkmier's attention. "When I have 29 of those signs flapping, it gets a bit nerve-wracking," she admits.

One of the biggest frustrations: salary. Burkmier earns $7.25 an hour. "I do the work of a teacher—but get paid like a classified employee."

Any changes on the horizon? While the number of paras assigned to computer labs will likely continue to increase, one expert sadly predicts salaries won't jump forward.

"I would love to think their status would change," says Anna Lou Pickett, director of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals, "but until we as a society recognize the need to improve the status of all paraeducators, the status of one group is not going to be affected."

Despite this prediction and tough economic times, Burkmier isn't giving up the fight to improve salaries. As president of the wall-to-wall Queen Creek Education Association, she knows: "Pats on the back are all well and good, but they don't put food on the table."



Paras Paid To Student Teach

The Ithaca (New York) Paraprofessional Association recently bargained a novel contract clause to help those who want to become teachers.

Now paras enrolled in teacher education programs can apply for six-week student teaching positions in the district. Instead of forfeiting salary, the six paras accepted each year will be paid their regular wages.

"We've always been rather stymied when it comes to career advancement," explains Ithaca teaching assistant and NEA member Susann Wilcox.

"This benefit changes that. And it indicates a willingness on the district's part to encourage advancement for members of any ESP unit."

Help Children Learn

Paul O'Neill

With more computer labs come more computer lab aides. Arizona computer lab tech Diane Burkmier helps students become computer literate.

Professor Studies Paras' Roles

Looking for a job description that accurately details what you do?

Canadian college instructor Brian Husby concludes that instructional paras play 11 roles—all critical to education.

A para is: ''child advocate, behavior manager, junior colleague, liaison between teacher and parents, assistant, clerk, routine manager, performer, strategist, evaluator, and instruction planner.''

How does Husby know? He's worked as a para, supervised paras as a special education teacher, trained paras at a community college in Alberta, Canada, and now studies paras as a doctoral candidate at the University of Arizona.

For the past six months, Husby's spent three hours a day observing three Canadian paras at work. Each para works full time with one kindergarten or first grade special education student.

Husby found the paras he studied to be committed to kids, intuitive, experienced with the disabled, full of ideas and opinions on how to reach kids—and, often, the child's primary teacher.

''If we're really going to make some changes in our education system,'' Husby says, ''we have to look at where the education is happening. If a lot of what's going on is being handled by paras, we have to study what they're doing and validate them in their role as educators.

''Paras need to have their insights and their experiences with a child seen as a valuable source of data in the planning and implementation of that child's education program.''

Husby expects to finish his dissertation this fall, then go on to publish it as a ''practical'' series of articles or a book.

Eventually, though, Husby hopes to go back into special education.

Off to a Good Start

How can you and the teacher you work with become an effective instructional team?

Anna Lou Pickett, director of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals, recommends teachers and paras schedule a meeting before school starts to get things off on the right foot.

Pickett suggests the meeting's agenda include:

► **Introductions.** Get to know something about one another. Mention your previous jobs, work experience, and skills. Ask the teacher you'll be working with to do the same.

► **Orientation.** Make sure you both understand the school's philosophy of education, rules and regulations, and emergency procedures.

► **Schedules.** Find out the teacher's daily and weekly teaching schedule and his or her short- and long-range plans for the students in the class. Make sure the teacher knows your schedule, too.

► **Roles and responsibilities.** Discuss what each of you will be responsible for—and how you can work together to achieve your goals.

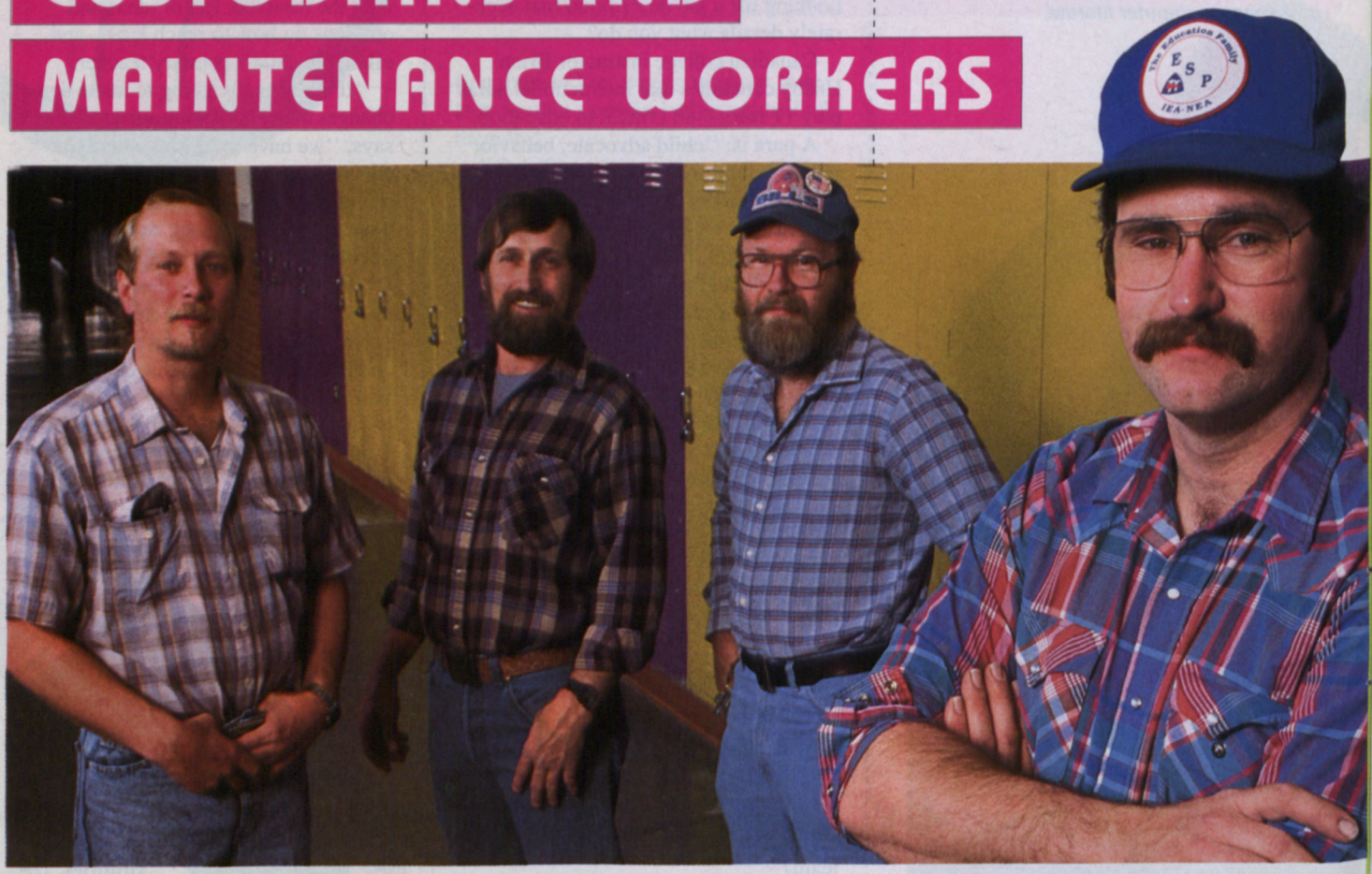
► **Philosophies.** Discuss discipline procedures, how to handle homework, methods of managing behavior, ways to reward students. If you'll be reinforcing lessons or tutoring, discuss teaching strategies.

► **Concerns.** Be open about your strengths. And use this opportunity to express any concerns you may have about meeting the requirements of the job.

► **Evaluations.** Get a clear understanding of what will be used to assess your work, who will evaluate you, and when and how you'll be evaluated.

► **Communications.** Set a schedule of regular meetings to keep the lines of communication open all year long.

CUSTODIANS AND MAINTENANCE WORKERS



Michael Gallacher

Missoula custodians standing up for safety: (from left) Jerry Nace, Floyd Waymire, Kevin Garner, Ted Quinlan. The committee they formed gives safety hints to school administrators and tips them off to hazards.

Safety by Committee

'Safety' is the watchword at four Missoula, Montana, schools, thanks to a school employees' safety committee.

Representatives of four schools meet monthly to discuss steps that can be taken to bring about greater safety. Ted Quinlan, secretary/treasurer of the Missoula County High School Custodial Engineers Association, represents Big Sky High School on the committee.

"No matter whether you're a secretary or a bus driver," contends Quinlan, "there's a hazard to be tackled."

The committee offers these tips:

- ▶ Install ramps for loading heavy machinery.
- ▶ Make sure a first aid kit is always available.
- ▶ Get rechargeable batteries instead of a cord for the carpet scrubber.
- ▶ Repair and replace scaffolding.
- ▶ Provide maintenance workers with safety equipment: hard hats, face shields, safety glasses, and gloves.
- ▶ Train new workers adequately.
- ▶ Give earplugs to workers who use printing equipment.
- ▶ Provide adequate ventilation in any room with a duplicating machine.

The safety committee members also requested that the administration sponsor first aid, CPR, and fire safety classes.

"Having a safety committee is one way a school can show it cares about its staff," says Quinlan. "And as we avoid accidents, we're helping reduce workers' compensation claims."

The safety committee encourages school employees to report possible safety violations to committee members. They in turn pass on the information to the chief engineer at their building.

"Our goal," concludes Quinlan, "is to sit down and work together to see that no one gets hurt."

NEA

Keep Schools Working

Stopping the Countdown

Problem: School boilers are like time bombs, just waiting to explode.
Solution: Train at least one custodian per school to work on boilers.

Association members are pushing for the creation and passage of legislation—either federal or state—to require training for boiler operators. Currently only a few states require school maintenance staff to be trained in boiler operation.

That lax regulation took a heavy toll in a 1982 school boiler explosion in Spencer, Oklahoma. The blast killed seven children and a teacher.

"Boilers are extremely dangerous," says Ed White, president of the Campbell County (Nevada) Education Association and a member of NEA's ESP Committee. "Accidents happen simply because schools have failed to enact reasonable precautions."

Adds White, "As it is today, you can bring anyone in off the streets and say, 'Here's a boiler. Take care of it for me.'"

Maine is one of the few states with a boiler training law. The legislation requires anyone who works with boilers to complete a 36-hour training course for handling low-pressure boilers of 15 pounds per square inch.

Gene Swiger, a colleague of White's on the ESP committee, took the Maine test 15 years ago when he went to work in South Portland.

"I'd like to see every state get a law like Maine's on the books," Swiger says. "States that don't have this requirement are putting a lot of people at risk."

A Portrait Of Neglect

One in four of America's school buildings is not fit for learning, let alone working. A recent survey by the Education Writers Association (EWA) found that these run-down schools aren't big, suitable, safe, or well-kept enough to accommodate the students and school employees who spend their days there.

The survey findings also suggest that of the buildings that are inadequate, 61 percent need maintenance or major repairs, 43 percent are obsolete, 42 percent present environmental hazards, 25 percent are overcrowded, and 13 percent are structurally unsound.

The picture isn't much brighter for new or modernized buildings whose equipment requires maintenance employees with more sophisticated training and skills. These schools have neither enough maintenance employees nor sufficient training programs for them, reports EWA in *Wolves at the Schoolhouse Door, An Investigation of the Condition of Public School Buildings.*

EWA based its findings on a survey of half the public school buildings in the country.

AP/Wide World Photos

Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, custodians Bob Rivera (left) and Peter Yates (right) were so popular with the 1991 senior class at Kingswood Regional High School, the students asked that the two give their commencement address. The honor didn't swell their heads: after the ceremony they changed clothes and cleaned up.

What We Do

BUS DRIVERS

Houston driver Billie Jordan is out for justice for all her colleagues.

Sam Pierson, Jr.

'Perks' Like Other People's

Would you believe there are still school bus drivers who are treated like casual laborers? Paid by the hour? Offered negligible benefits? Supervised by petty tyrants who haven't heard word one about participatory management?

Alas, you probably would. But Association activists like Texan Billie Jordan, an 18-year veteran driver with the Houston Independent School District (HISD), are chipping away at these injustices.

Jordan chairs the consultation team (collective bargaining is illegal for public employees in Texas) for Houston Education Support Personnel. Last school year, she got rid of one of HISD's chronic violations of drivers' due process rights: automatic assessment of demerits after an accident—before any determination of fault.

"My own case put automatic demerits on the agenda," Jordan explains. "I had a minor traffic accident with my bus, and HISD tried to trot out the automatic demerits as usual. But I did something unusual: I threatened to sue.

"Later, through consultation, we nailed down some due process: now demerits can't be assessed unless there's been a conference in which proof of a driver's fault is identified."

Jordan has more goals for Houston and Texas bus drivers:

► "A six-hour minimum workday. That would make us eligible for more benefits.

► "Sick leave paid by the state for all ESP. Last year the governor vetoed a bill to mandate ESP leave. But since then we've elected a new governor, Ann Richards, and I think our sick leave will pass now.

► "The end of mindless unfairness. Last year HISD suspended drivers who'd been absent more than 5 days—even when they were in hospitals. And only people with perfect attendance were offered summer work."

"We're trying to get HISD to understand that you have to change with the times," Jordan concludes. "Today people drive school buses for a livelihood—not for pin money."

Move Precious Cargoes

Curse of the Giant Buses

School buses are getting longer, capacity is getting greater, seats are getting higher, and drivers are finding it harder to figure out what's going on behind them.

"I'm hearing about it across the state," says Becky Howell Lee, an NEA director and Walker County, Alabama, bus driver.

"State education budget cuts have worsened the situation in some areas, because bus routes are being consolidated and lengthened," Lee adds.

"You just can't see the little children in the mirror," adds bus driver Peggy Wood, an ESP leader from St. Clair County, Alabama. "And the high school students—when they don't want you to see them, they just slink down." When Wood starting driving 24 years ago, her bus had a capacity of 54 students. The one she drives now carries 72.

Most popular solution: more bus aides.

Oldies, Baddies

In 1977, Congress upgraded safety standards for new school buses. By 1990, only 12 percent of the nation's 350,000-plus school buses were pre-1977s.

But states have sloughed off their pre-'77s at spectacularly different rates. By 1990 seven mostly Northeastern states had gotten down to 0: Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, Vermont, West Virginia.

But seven mostly Western states still had at least 25 percent of their fleets in pre-'77s: California (39 percent), Oregon (32 percent), Washington (31 percent), Arizona (30 percent), Colorado (27 percent), Alabama (26 percent), South Dakota (25 percent).

(No figures were available for Alaska or Louisiana.)

Source: School Bus Fleet 1991 Fact Book.

New Federal Safety Regs

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has issued one new bus safety requirement and proposed another:

- ► Required a left-side signal arm that swings out on buses sold after 8/31/92.
- ► Proposed an outside convex wide-angle mirror. This plus the already required flat mirror will enable drivers to see immediately ahead of the bus as well as around the front left and right corners.

NHTSA also has issued nonbinding Guideline 17, which recommends, among other things, that states:

- ► Define large vans that can carry more than 10 people as buses and hold them to the same color and marking requirements as large buses.
- ► Replace pre-1977 buses. If that's not possible, give them extra-conscientious maintenance.
- ► Require that baggage be stored according to federal specifications so riders can get to emergency exits without difficulty.
- ► Require that pupils using school buses receive bus safety training at least once a semester.
- ► Require drivers to wear safety belts when the bus is moving.

Body by Fischer

Guilderland, New York, bus mechanic Robert Fischer looked at a golf cart and saw a teaching tool. The result: a handmade miniature school bus in which kids can learn about safety because everything works—windows, doors, emergency exit, flashing lights.

What We Do

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Tell It to Your Bargainers

What are the concerns of office personnel? The same ones come up again and again, says Karen Gee, a collective bargaining consultant with the Ohio Education Association who's worked extensively with ESP. But, Gee adds, support staff who bargain contracts have ways to deal with these problems. Here's her list, with some possible contractual solutions.

• *Standing in for the principal*
Gee recommends contract language spelling out who's in charge. Often, she notes, a principal will verbally designate a teacher to take charge—but because that teacher is in a classroom, it becomes the secretary's duty, by default, to deal with the district superintendent or a ringing fire alarm.

When the designee's name is in the contract, the secretary can point to an official reason not to step in.

• *More responsibility, no more pay*
The two should go hand-in-hand. That's a point the contract can deal with directly.

• *Lack of substitute secretaries*
When a secretary's sick, work piles up. Get the district to maintain a substitute list or a contract with a temporary employment company, or allow overtime.

• *Working alone in a building*
In some areas, working alone during summers and vacation periods can be dangerous. Get a guarantee that if there's no custodian or principal around, secretaries will be allowed to work in the central office or at home.

• *Duty before dawn*
School secretaries who are on call between 6 and 8 a.m. to take calls from teachers reporting in sick and to find substitutes for their classes should receive extra money—either a stipend or time-and-a-half.

• *Keeping accounts for school drives and fundraisers.*
Bargain in a stipend for this duty that's not part of the routine job.

• *Not enough in-service training.*
Bargain not only for new technological equipment, but also for training in operating it. Tuition reimbursement is usually easier to get if it's job-related—but anything's negotiable.

Short Year, Short-Staffed

School secretary Martha Livingston, who works at C. L. Salter Elementary School in Talladega, Alabama, has a growing concern: enrollment's booming, but the size of the office staff stays the same.

In her 14 years at Salter, Livingston's seen the student population grow from 286 to 500. Still, she's the only office worker.

To make matters worse, Livingston's on a nine-and-a-half-month schedule.

Livingston's work calendar and the school's fiscal calendar are in conflict. Her year ends in early June; the school's fiscal year ends on the 30th. Those June books have to be done.

Each year the school calls Livingston back to complete the accounting before the auditor comes. When she's called back, she gets paid out of the school's general fund, not by the district.

"It's not fair that my salary should have to come from the general fund," says Livingston. "That money comes from fundraising. It's meant for school activities."

Martha Livingston: She'd like her work year to match her work assignments.

Livingston feels the district should be realistic and revise her schedule so that it's not different from those of many other school secretaries. What's needed: a few weeks at the end of the school year, and one or two at the beginning.

"That way I'd be able to get the school ready to open, too," she points out.

The Strain Goes On

Repetitive strain injuries—pain and disability caused by unnatural motions repeated over months or years—remain one of the major occupational hazards for office workers.

These injuries range from annoying to disabling. Carpal tunnel syndrome, for example, which affects the wrists, may require the severance of a ligament in the wrist. Afterwards, victims may have to change work assignments or even jobs.

No question, it's better to prevent repetitive strain injuries. Here are a few practices to avoid, if possible:

► making repeated small, rapid movements

► working in an awkward position or holding the same position for a long time

► using force or moving heavy loads.

When you can't avoid these kinds of movement, stop and rest as soon as you have the chance.

Share Information

Not To Worry?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has released the findings of a study that included more than 730 women who used VDTs while pregnant. Contrary to popular belief, says NIOSH, the miscarriage rate of these women wasn't significantly higher than that of pregnant women not exposed to a VDT.

NIOSH researchers studied telephone operators in eight Southeastern states. Half used VDTs throughout their workday; half did not. Between 1983 and 1986, there were 882 pregnancies in this group.

About 17 percent of the operators who used terminals on the job during the first three months of pregnancy had miscarriages, compared with 16 percent of those who didn't work with VDTs.

Despite these comforting findings, many researchers remain uncomfortable. Neurology professor Ross Adey of Loma Linda University in California has been doing work in this area for a long time.

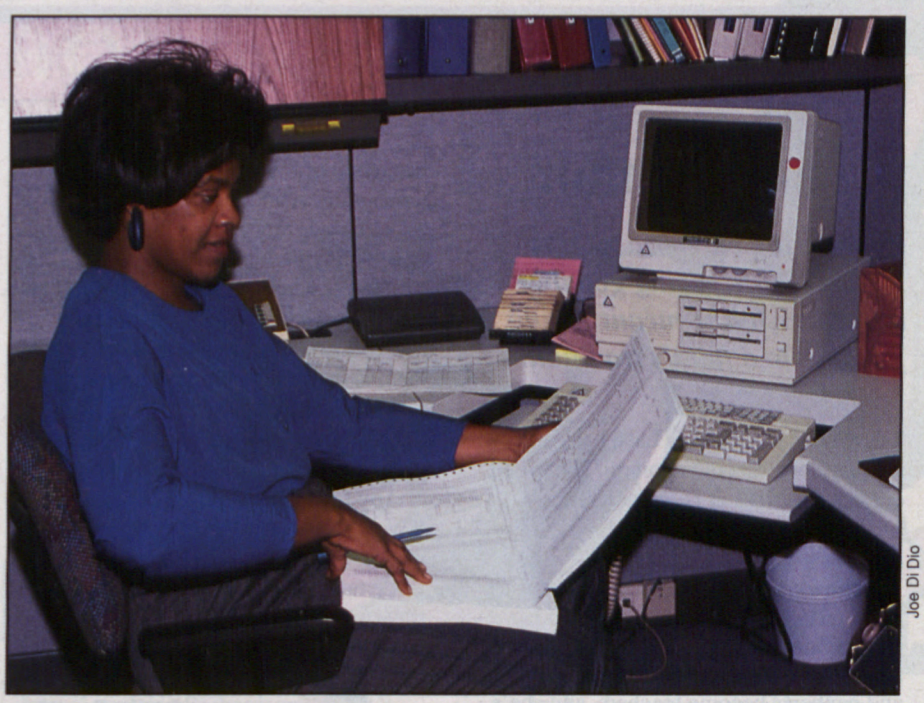
The magnetic field produced by a VDT is complicated, Adey notes. And a significant body of research on animals suggests that VDT fields of this type have health-related effects. It's not time, Adey suggests, to close the books on the matter.

For one thing, new classifications of radiation are showing up with dizzying rapidity—and dizziness may not be their worst effect. Consider low frequency radiation, typical of VDTs. According to the Women's Health Division of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, this type of radiation can be dangerous—although nobody yet knows how dangerous, or in just what way.

Bottom line: Turn off your VDT, says the Department—and your printer, if it's nearby—whenever you're not going to be using it for a while.

Other suggestions are coming from overseas. Four years ago, the Swedish government looked at findings from studies conducted in their country and adopted guidelines on VDT emissions. Although the guidelines aren't law, they're becoming a worldwide standard.

IDEA, a U.S. company that makes VDTs, claims it's the first manufacturer in this country to fully comply with the Swedish recommendations. Still, IDEA insists, compliance doesn't mean emissions cause health problems. Compliance is a response to public concern.



Joe Di Dio

Nobody knows for sure how VDT emissions can affect you. Until they do, it's smart to turn off the computer—and the printer, if it's nearby—when you're not using it for a while.

The question of the possible harm done by VDTs' emissions of radiation remains unanswered. But beyond that, VDT work may harm pregnant women in other ways. One example: Studies continue on whether stress and long hours at a VDT screen might contribute to pregnancy loss.

Make My Day

Office workers in Eagle Point, Oregon, came up with a list of ways administrators can help them do their job as excellently as they'd like to.

► Provide the right equipment. Too often, a secretary's video display terminal is a discard from the school's computer room.

► Coordinate purchases of equipment and software districtwide—and certainly schoolwide. When computers and programs are compatible, information can flow easily, via disk, to wherever it's needed. Otherwise, not.

The office workers also came up with a few hints for their teaching colleagues:

► When you ask an office worker to do something that might take too long to fit into the workday, take responsibility for getting overtime approved.

► Don't ask a secretary to give you information about a student or employee if it's a type that should be considered confidential.

► Make the effort to understand your classified colleagues' jobs, stresses, limitations, income levels, and working conditions—and share yours in return.

Mutual understanding can build a stronger union and a better place to work.

What We Do

FOOD SERVICE WORKERS

A Family Affair

For retiring cafeteria worker Beverly Lash, saying goodbye to the lunch line meant saying goodbye to a family tradition.

After 22 years, Beverly Lash has baked her last cafeteria cinnamon roll and rolled out her last pizza at Highland Terrace Elementary School in New Haven, Indiana.

Following in her mother's footsteps as a cafeteria worker, Lash has served her own children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. She's watched her daughters and nephews become teachers, and she's treated co-workers as members of the family.

Being a grandmother of children in the school has brought a few extra duties, says Lash. "Grandma's always there when one of the kids has forgotten the lunch money, and the younger ones stop by with their moms for a hug and a little chocolate milk."

"The teachers realize how proud I am of my grandchildren," Lash notes. "They always let me know when one of them is in a school play or presenting a project, and they invite me to their classrooms to see paintings or science projects the children have finished."

Any favorite memories for Lash? "Well, there were a few funny moments," she recalls. "Like the time we made taffy apples, but they stuck to the trays and we couldn't get them off."

Giving the cafeteria a personal touch is what Lash says she'll miss most. "We were known for our homemade bread and cinnamon rolls, and we always tried to do a little something special for holidays," she adds.

Lash's retirement was a bittersweet occasion. "If I could change one thing, it would be the attitude of the system toward classified staff," says Lash. "When teachers retire after many years, the superintendent takes them to dinner—recognizes their contribution. Nonteaching staff aren't acknowledged at all. So many classified employees work so very hard—we deserve recognition for our contribution, too."

What does Lash plan to do with her new leisure? "Well, my husband insists I won't be cooking for quite some time," she says. "He plans to take me out to dinner."

One big happy family: Beverly Lash (center) with two of her daughters and seven of her grandchildren.

Dean Musser

Fuel Hungry Students

Small Schools, Big Challenges

Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, is so small, notes cafeteria worker Sharon Richardson, the town doesn't even have a movie theater.

What Mount Horeb does have are schools and school cafeterias. For years, they've been just about the only game in town.

Today, recession, competition, and shrinking student populations have hit Mount Horeb as badly as any metropolis. The challenge for small school cafeterias, says Richardson, is to find a way to keep kids coming. Richardson is a cook at the Mount Horeb High School kitchen, which prepares the meals for all the schools in the district.

"We have two fast-food places in town—both of them conveniently located two blocks from the high school," says Richardson.

That convenient location spells trouble for the school lunch program, which needs the students' business if it's to stay self-supporting. How have the Mount Horeb cafeterias met the challenge?

"We've created Taco Tuesdays and replaced snack bars with salad and potato bars," explains Richardson. "That's brought many students back to the program.

"At the same time, we've found ways to cut back on expenses and fat content without cutting nutrition," Richardson points out. "We make yogurt-based dill dips, use more turkey and chicken to replace beef, and make our own salad dressings."

Sharon Richardson whips up good meals for the students in Mount Horeb, Wisconsin—and some other folks as well.

Morry Gash

At the elementary school level, the cafeterias provide special meals for Grandparents' Days. Paul Bunyan Days bring together students, teachers, and cafeteria workers, all dressed as lumberjacks, for a pancake breakfast.

"We want to make sure our schoolchildren are well-fed and our cafeterias keep running," notes Richardson. "For their sake and ours."

A Menu of Wishes

What would you wish for in an ideal food service operation?

"Pensions," says Susan Ashton, president of the East Allen County (Indiana) Food Service Association. "Right now 70 percent of my members don't qualify because of their hourly schedules. That's unfair. They have the dedication to work 23 years, and all they get is severance pay."

Joyce Richmond in Dewitt, Michigan, would like to see training for employees. "When you have to learn on the job to use a huge slicer, where's the safety factor?" she asks.

Something else that would brighten Richmond's days: an indoor storeroom for supplies instead of a barn down at the bottom of the hill.

"How about school kitchens designed to fit our work patterns and needs?" wonders Ashton. "And we'd love a window or at least a mural to make the kitchen more pleasant."

"Really good exhaust systems—or air conditioning," says Geraldine Smith of San Antonio, Texas.

"I'd love to have better equipment and a larger kitchen," says Dorothy Davis, group leader at Beagle Middle School in Grand Ledge, Michigan. "And all of us would love to get the respect and recognition to match the hard work we do."

Who's New in the Cafeteria?

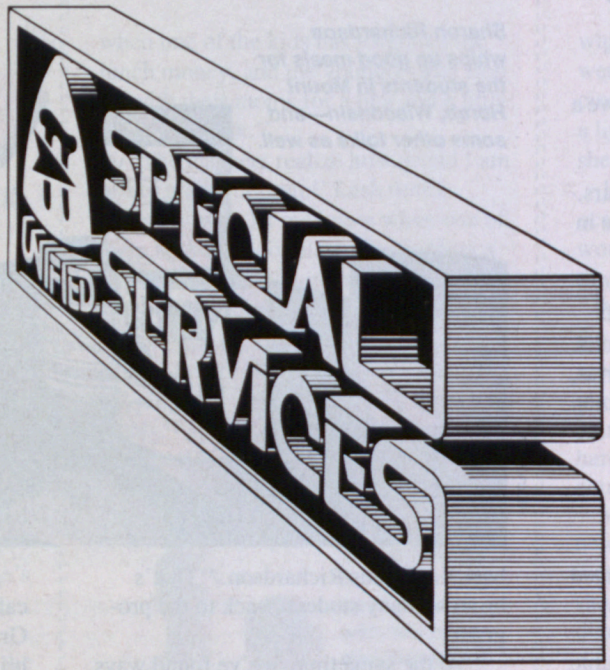
School lunches aren't the only things cafeterias are dishing up these days. Whitesburg (Alabama) Middle School is among the many that serve breakfast to students who'd otherwise go without.

Baker Martha Bolden notes that the kitchen also provides snacks and meals for the school's day-care program.

In Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, the high school cafeteria serves not just the school's seniors, but the town's as well. For the past eight years, it's sent hot meals to the local senior citizens' center.

"School cafeterias are filling more and more community needs," Bolden sums up. "We're a vital part of the system."

POWER THROUGH PARTICIPATION



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IN MARYLAND

How Many Jobs Make a Day?

If it's 6:30 a.m. or 4:00 in the afternoon, where would you most likely find a Worcester County-MSESC (Maryland State Educational Services Council) member?

Probably at a second, even third, job, earning the extra dollars necessary to make a living in one of the richest counties in the state.

That's a pattern the 50-member Worcester County-MSESC wants to break, says custodian Margie Wilson, president of this newest MSESC affiliate. The local plans to organize for better salaries and working conditions.

Margie Wilson and her husband, William, know what it's like to work two jobs. In fact, they know what it's like to work three. William Wilson operates a school bus (which he owns) in the morning, then spends the afternoon and evening at a custodial job for the Worcester School District. Both Wilsons clean offices three times a week as well.

"Worcester County includes one of the most expensive resort towns in the state—Ocean City—and yet its ESP members are among the poorest paid," says Wilson.

Todd Dudek

One of William Wilson's three jobs: driving his own school bus. Margie Wilson has just two jobs—if you don't count being a local Association president.

IN PENNSYLVANIA

Reading, Writing, Respect

Custodian Joseph Barnhart, age 57, went back to school last fall. He didn't want to lose any time before getting started on his high school equivalency diploma (GED). Barnhart, who works at Charleroi Area Junior-Senior High, near Pittsburgh, had just learned to read.

Barnhart was abandoned in a railroad station as a baby. Except for a few years in a foster home, he spent his youth in an institution for orphaned kids. "When I was 14 or 15," he recalls, "they shoved me onto a farm where everyone worked from sunup to sundown. There was never any time to get an education. When I left there, I got a job right away."

In putting illiteracy behind him, Barnhart had the help of a professional teacher. With him from the start was Ruth Chester, retired from elementary teaching in the Allenport school district.

Barnhart also has the backing of one other important person: "My wife, Maxine, is 100 percent behind me," says Barnhart. "Without her, none of this would have been possible."

To beat illiteracy, Joseph Barnhart got help from a pro: retired teacher Ruth Chester.

Scott Goldsmith

"We want to make sure our Worcester employees get fair wages for the work they do," Wilson continues. "Most of us hold down two, even three, jobs just to make ends meet. We clean houses, offices, drive delivery vehicles. That's not fair—we have to fight for our rights."

Wilson, her husband, and other Worcester County employees had a taste of how unity works last year when they piled into school buses with 70 other MSESC members and headed to the state capitol to push for bargaining rights.

"We have to have some way to stand up for our rights," continues Wilson. On some of last winter's most severe snow days, she notes, teachers and children were told to stay home but support staff were expected to make their way to their workplaces.

"We want to be able to voice these kinds of concerns," adds Wilson. "The issue isn't just fair treatment, it's survival."

IN ARIZONA

Crewing for a Hot-Air Balloon

Phoenix purchasing officer Marty Middleton doesn't waste her spare time in wild-goose chases, but she does put in a lot of hours chasing a hot-air balloon.

Middleton, a senior buyer for the Kyrene School District, is crew chief for husband J. C. Middleton, a Kyrene special education teacher and hot-air balloonist.

A hot-air balloon goes wherever the wind takes it, so the pilot always needs a ride home. A chaser in a car or truck tracks the balloon as long as it's in the air, then collects balloon and balloonist when they come down.

"You have to be prepared to go any direction at any moment," Marty Middleton explains. "You don't have time to look at a map; you have to keep in visual and radio contact with the balloon."

Which means you have to know beforehand where the roads—or the gates in the fences—are. And if you're far from home? "You might need two chasers in two different cars in radio contact with each other," Middleton explains. "One focuses on staying in touch with the balloon; the other, on ending up in the right place."

Middleton is past president of the Kyrene Classified Association and vice chair of the Arizona ESP Caucus.

ESP leader Marty Middleton makes sure husband J. C. doesn't vanish into thin air.

Ken Akers

Why we're proud

IN ALASKA

On Permanent Stand-by

Delta school employees Connie Ott and Ellen Wofford are always on call.

Ott, a custodian, and Wofford, a food service worker, are volunteer emergency medical technicians in the Delta-Fort Greeley area some 100 miles south of Fairbanks. In fact, they're a third of the community team.

Wofford has been a volunteer for six years, Ott for four. Both agree: It's a matter of personal satisfaction.

Wofford and Ott say a call on their two-way radios can mean just about anything: a vehicle accident, someone injured while fighting a forest fire, maybe a tourist on the highway who's developed a medical problem.

"The school district gives us release time to respond to the emergencies," says Ott. "That's vital. Without district cooperation, we simply couldn't be volunteers."

The medical team goes beyond emergency work, notes Ott, to work with students and the community at large. Team members teach first aid, and they sponsor safety campaigns—most recently, advocating the use of seat belts.

The Fort Greeley medical team will soon have its first canine member: Ott's dog, Torrey, a two-year-old German shepherd, is in training for search and rescue work.

Mike Mathers

Wofford (left), Ott, and their medical team's newest recruit: Ott's German shepherd, Torrey.

IN ARKANSAS

A Wing and a Prayer

1990 was the year that put the Little Rock Bus Drivers Choir on the map.

Last year, the 25-member gospel choir went out of state to perform before Mississippi ESP members at their annual conference in Jackson. They began to get other performance requests from groups outside the small network of churches where they started out.

"Five years ago, when we started, we were content to perform Sundays in local churches," says the group's music director and founder, JoAnne Hill. "Now we get calls from hospitals, civic groups, you name it—especially on the holidays. We've been on TV twice. It's hard to believe."

Hill, who sings and plays piano and organ, says that she and other Little Rock bus drivers started the choir to improve the drivers' morale. "It's brought us together," she says, "and that's what we're after."

Better harmony on and off stage is evident, agrees Little Rock Bus Driver President Theretha Jackson. "We're a much closer unit now," she says.

Jackson says the drivers rehearse during breaks between runs at work. Some favorite songs: "Amazing Grace," "I Know What Prayer Can Do," and "Speak, Lord" (from the movie *The Color Purple*). The choir's also rehearsing some classical music pieces.

Some admirers say it's time the choir cut an album. Hill says that's something to think about, but for now music is enjoyment.

It's also a form of prayer, says Hill. "Through the singing, I thank God for every day we're driving."

Staton Breidenthal

No second job, no grocery shopping: Members of the Little Rock Bus Drivers local Association spend their breaks between runs rehearsing the gospel singing that takes them farther than their buses do.

IN MARYLAND

Teddy Bears to the Rescue

Tucked among the specialized gear—from firehoses to medical equipment—that Carroll County (Maryland) firemen, ambulance crews, police, and state troopers carry every day is one piece of equipment all the varied crews are ready to use if necessary—a teddy bear.

"For a terrified child, few things are more comforting than a reassuring hug, or a teddy bear to hold," says Sharon Fischer, an instructional assistant and co-director of the Teddy Bear Safety Patrol.

The Patrol has distributed more than 500 teddy bears to Carroll County police officers, state troopers, and ambulance crews, who bring on the bears whenever an emergency involves children. Each unit dresses its bears in a distinctive shirt.

"In the beginning, one trooper wasn't sure the bears would make any difference," says Fischer. "Then he was called to the scene of a school bus accident. One child was so badly frightened he couldn't be comforted. But when a trooper gave him a teddy bear to hold, he calmed right down."

Many Carroll County schools have lent their support to the Patrol, raising funds for more teddy bears through sock hops and carnivals. As Fischer puts it: "It's become their pet project."

Fischer and partner Sharon Richardson have now expanded the Teddy Bear Patrol's activities. A "McGruff Tips" hotline gives safety advice. Another program teaches children how to use the 911 system.

"I put together a manual explaining the use of 911. Now we visit schools around the county demonstrating 911 to students using a practice line. The state troopers are working with us on that project, too."

Care Bears: Sharon Fischer and a few of her furry friends.

Dave Tillman

Why we're proud

IN FLORIDA

Tom Burton

NIPSCO President Garvin Harden poses with a few of his prized relics.

Garvin's Gators

Garvin Harden, president of the Non-Instructional Personnel of Seminole County (NIPSCO/FTP-NEA), hunts alligators for fun and profit.

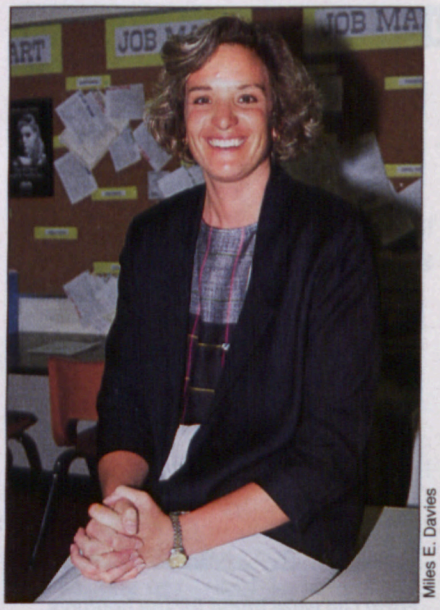
State agents in charge of regulating the 'gator population will pay $350 for a 6-foot alligator. The meat is sold to restaurants, and the hides command $40 to $50 a foot from tanneries.

Harden, who is a maintenance employee by day, takes his moonlighting job seriously. "I respect them," he says of the deadly reptiles. "But when they become a danger to pets or human life, they have to be caught."

Because alligators "belong" to the state of Florida, only a licensed "nuisance trapper" is allowed to catch them. Harden is not licensed, but licensed trappers pay him to join them: it takes two to bag a 'gator.

Harden uses a harpoon connected to 75 feet of rope and a long pole. The object is to slip a rope over the alligator's jowls so you can tape its mouth shut and tow it ashore. On most hunts, the 'gators are brought in live to a state-operated processing plant where they are killed.

Harden says he enjoys the hunt, but the mosquitoes are fierce. And, he adds, there's one other thing: "You can never be too careful with the alligators."



Miles E. Davies

Ruthanne Kastner has many allies in the Durango business community.

IN COLORADO

Profile of a 'Desperado'

Name: Ruthanne Kastner

Title: Career Center Coordinator, Durango (Colorado) Senior High School

Local Association: Durango Education Support Personnel Association (DESPA, hence "Desperadoes")

Claim to Fame: Member, the Business Council, a local public-private sector group founded to further school reform (it could be the only such group in the nation to have ESP members). Kastner and fellow Council members are seeking funding for their first school reform projects—latch-key and adopt-a-school programs.

Other Claim to Fame: Bargaining spokesperson for the Desperadoes, who recently negotiated a 25 percent pay increase over 2 1/2 years.

Next Task as a Desperado: Lobby the Colorado legislature in its September '91 special session on school finance to make sure funds are available for that raise.

IN PENNSYLVANIA

Telling It to Capitol Hill

"I'm not afraid to talk to people—and the teachers' issues are our issues," says Pennsylvania custodian Genevieve Smith. And Smith will go as far as Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., to do her talking.

As one of three identified ESP members on NEA's Congressional Contact Teams, Smith keeps in touch with her U.S. Representative, Joseph Gaydos (D-Pa.) of McKeesport. Gaydos is a member of the House Education and Labor Committee.

"At election time, I'm a door-knocker," says Smith. "I've worked on campaigns for Congress, the state legislature, judgeships, and I work hard. The candidates remember me."

On a recent visit to Capitol Hill, Smith went to Gaydos' office to present school employees' viewpoints on health care, the education budget, and federal higher education programs. "Anything that affects the teachers affects us," she notes. "They get something, then we get it—so it makes sense to work on it together."

Washington State school secretary Judy Drake and New York student employment specialist Barbara Presley are other support personnel who work on Congressional Contact Teams.

Courthouse to capitol, custodian Genevieve Smith knows politics, and she puts her knowledge to work for education employees.

Keith Srakocic

Why we're proud

Tom Hindman

Ed tech Ellen Martin with student Susan Chapman: the best story's not in the book.

IN MAINE

Two Minutes, a Life Saved

Ellen Martin says anybody would have done the same. But it was Martin, an education technician, whose quick use of lifesaving skills saved the life of nine-year-old Susan Chapman last winter.

Chapman's third-grade class at Bangor's Fruit Street School was enjoying a reward of hard candy when the little girl began choking. "She wasn't making any sound—her mouth was just open," Martin recalls.

Martin had always wondered whether she'd really be able to use first aid to save a life if she needed to. Now, reassuring the child, she calmly reached around her from behind and began the Heimlich Maneuver.

Chapman began breathing. Martin persisted, and the candy popped out.

Today a child is alive because of Martin's quick action. But Martin doesn't set herself up to be a hero. "I didn't have time to think about it," she comments. "I just did it."

IN LOUISIANA

Ken Miguez

Forty GIs were home for the holidays, courtesy of bus driver Joshua McDaniel.

McDaniel's Run

When it came to giving some 40 soldiers from Louisiana's Fort Polk a free ride, Franklin bus driver Joshua McDaniel, Jr., applied the golden rule. It was the holiday season, and the troops didn't have any way to get home.

"I thought about how I'd feel if I couldn't get home to my family," says McDaniel. "Besides, they were contributing to the war effort. By giving them a ride, I could contribute, too."

McDaniel uses his own bus to transport schoolchildren five days a week. But for this occasion he chose a former Trailways Eagle owned by a musical group he manages, the Gospel Chimes. On the Sunday before Christmas, McDaniel drove the 1962 model bus 200 miles to Fort Polk in Leesburg, picked up the soldiers, and drove them back to Franklin for the holidays. He made the return trip with the troops a few days later.

"I kept thinking how this trip might be the last visit home for some of them," says McDaniel. But his fears were never realized: "Thank God, they all made it back safe after the Gulf War."

IN ILLINOIS

Lending a Hand

Citizens of Rockford revived the spirit of quilting bees and barn raisings last spring when thousands pitched in to build an outdoor hands-on science museum for kids.

Twenty members of the Rockford Building Maintenance Association, IEA-NEA, took their turns plastering, sawing, nailing, carrying lumber, and handling all sorts of carpentry tasks—despite nearly constant downpours.

"I changed clothes twice, and I was still soaking wet when I got home," explains truck driver and local secretary-treasurer Gene Oslund. "Still, it was a lot of fun. I helped build a ramp and two different seating areas."

One of the highlights: meeting Norman Rockwell's grandson, who designed the "largest outdoor pinball machine in the world" for the park and supervised its construction.

When completed, the Rock River Discovery Park will have an outdoor weather station, a cave, an echo tube, a friction slide, a maze, a water activity area, sympathetic swings (one swing drives the others), and more. Kids will learn while touching, riding, and playing.

"I know my kids will play there," Oslund says—with more than a touch of civic pride.

NEA members and other community volunteers pitch in to build the Rock River Discovery Park's friction slide. The Rockford school district lent its tools to the effort, too.

Perry Smith

Bruce Kellman

Diane Formoso helps kids any way she can—here, through an Association-backed political drive.

IN WASHINGTON

Clothes for Clover Park

It's not unusual for Clover Park school bus driver Diane Formoso to do a dozen loads of laundry at a time.

But the marathon washing isn't all for Formoso's family of eight. Most of it consists of donations to her clothing bank for needy students.

Formoso established her first clothing bank—at Lakeview Elementary—almost three years ago. Today she runs a districtwide bank, stocked by donations from anyone and any place she can get them.

Formoso explains her motivation: "Youngsters were riding my bus hungry, wearing their parents' clothes. There's nothing sadder than children who have nowhere to turn to make a change in their lives."

Most of the clothes in the bank go to elementary students. Older kids usually get jobs to earn clothing money, Formoso explains.

The Clover Park bus driver considers the kids on her bus an extended family. But her own family at home is extended, too. Besides three biological children—two of whom are now adults—she and her husband have five foster kids, all handicapped.

How does Formoso manage it all? She credits her family and friends with keeping her from burning out. "With support, you can do almost anything," she says.

Why we're proud

IN COLORADO

The Secretary Of the Army

Actually, Pat Lemster is the secretary of military science. Lemster works in the administrative office of the Army Junior ROTC program in the Denver Public Schools. Her boss is an LTC (Ret.)—that's a retired lieutenant colonel.

Here's what Lemster *doesn't* do:

- ► wear fatigues (or any uniform)
- ► climb walls or swing on a rope
- ► take salutes
- ► go into the weapons vault
- ► eat K-rations.

What Lemster does do:

► manage a five-person office that runs a program with 25 instructors for 1,200 cadets in grades 9-12.

► serve as vice president and president-elect of her local Association, the Denver Association of Educational Office Personnel (DAEOP).

Pat Lemster doesn't wear a uniform, true—but she keeps track of a whole barracks' worth.

Lisa Griffin

Lon Horwedel

Food service worker Barb Vosburg (left) and her daughter, bus driver Sally Gerth, dress up a bowling alley for the post-prom bash.

IN MICHIGAN

The Party's Over...Or Is It?

When the clock strikes 12 at the Reeths-Puffer High School prom, students don't turn into pumpkins or troublemakers. And they don't linger over the last dance. They've got a bus to catch.

From midnight to 5 a.m., it's party-hearty time at the post-prom mystery bash—thrown by NEA members in the Reeths-Puffer Education Support Personnel Association (Custodial, Maintenance, Food Service, and Transportation unit).

"When kids don't have something else to do, they're going to get in trouble," says bus driver Sally Gerth, parent of a senior, Amy, and voice of experience.

So Gerth dreamed up the "post-prom mystery trip." The party takes place at an out-of-town bowling alley, tropically decorated by Gerth's mother, Barb Vosburg, a food service worker and fellow Association member.

From midnight till 5 in the morning, kids bowl, dance to tunes spun by a DJ (a school custodian), play pool and ping pong, and "gamble" at a makeshift casino. The lucky ones win TVs, VCRs, and boom boxes.

And, thanks to donations from the school's booster club of area merchants, the school system (which provides the buses and gas), and 15 bus drivers (who give their time), it's all free.

"Kids are wound up after the prom," Gerth says. "So we give 'em someplace safe to go and have a good time."

Safety aside, why does Gerth do it? "I just thought it'd be neat to throw a big party," she says.

IN INDIANA

Beyond the Good Enough

"We can't just minister to the good enough or the wealthy enough," says Becky Federspiel, Indiana bus driver, Association member, and Sunday school teacher. "We need to minister to everyone in our society."

That's why Federspiel and her husband teach Bible study classes every week to prisoners at the nearby Fort Wayne jail. In addition, as members of the Chuck Colson Prison Fellowship, the Federspiels travel to prisons across the state offering three-day Bible seminars.

Whether driving special education students to school in East Allen County or teaching adult prison inmates, Federspiel says she's providing a needed service, doing something she loves, and "learning patience."

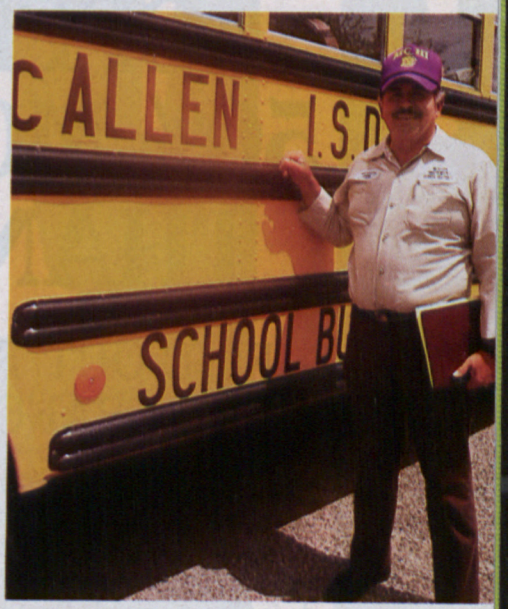
"I find it very rewarding," Federspiel says of her prison work, adding that audiences are friendly, attentive, and open to help.

"It's very hard for them once they get out," she says. "The stigma stays with them, they have a hard time getting jobs and finding a place to live, and most of their families have written them off. Eighty-two percent go back to prison within two years.

"So," she explains, "we're willing to invest a part of our lives in helping them at least get the chance to make it on the outside."

Dean Musser

Becky Federspiel "loves driving a school bus just because I love kids."



Delcia Lopez

Lucio Anzaldua wrote the books—translated them, anyway—on the Commercial Driver's License.

IN TEXAS

Bilingual Bus Briefings

When it comes to training school bus drivers in the Rio Grande Valley for the new federally-mandated commercial driver's license (CDL), bilingual is better. That's the experience of Lucio Anzaldua, school bus driver and member-organizer for the McAllen unit of the Texas State Teachers Association.

"Some bus drivers were educated in Mexican rather than U.S. schools," Anzaldua explains. "They get more out of training done in Spanish with Spanish-language materials than from English-language presentations."

So Anzaldua provides training in Spanish—with Spanish-language handouts he translated himself—for drivers in McAllen and a couple of neighboring border districts.

The test is demanding, Anzaldua acknowledges. "But ultimately," he continues, "we hope the CDL will be a plus for bus drivers. It can enable us to ask for more money and maybe change from part-time to full-time status."

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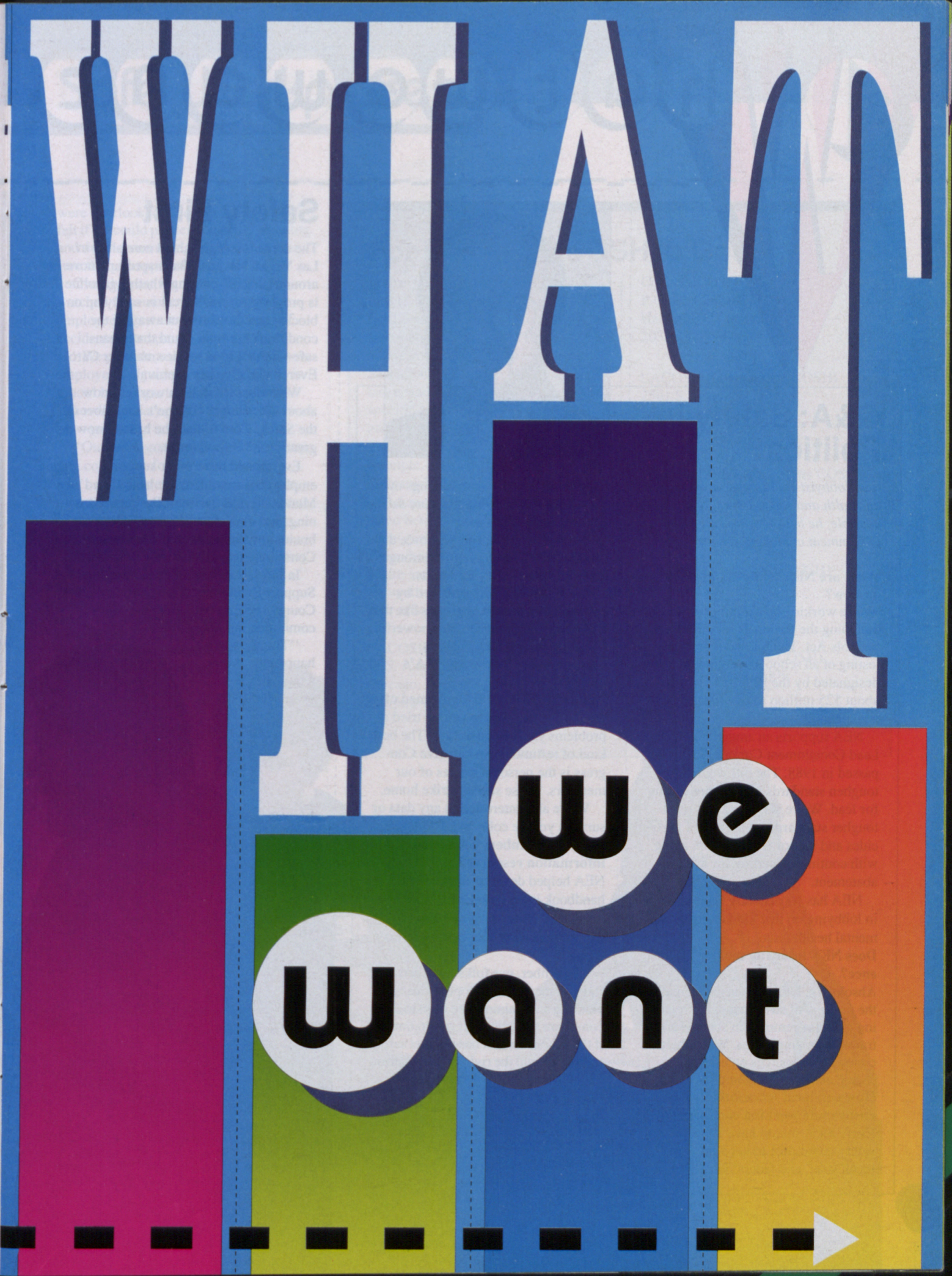

WHAT
we
want

What we want

Q&A: Safety in Politics

NEA lobbyist Joel Packer is an expert on health and safety issues. It's really possible, he believes: We can enlist government in making schools safer.

What are NEA lobbyists working on now?

We're working on a number of fronts, including the Radon Testing for Safe Schools Act. The bill would require testing of all schools in high-risk areas designated by the EPA and provide about $25 million to pay for testing and clean-up.

NEA supports an amendment to the Lead Containment Control Act, passed in 1988. The bill would toughen standards and require testing for lead. We're also working to get tougher standards on the use of pesticides and indoor air pollution, along with continued funding for asbestos abatement.

NEA has consistently been a leader in lobbying on that kind of environmental health issue.

Does NEA lobbying make a difference?

Absolutely. NEA was instrumental in the passage of strict standards regarding asbestos removal in schools and training for employees. We've helped create key resources on asbestos, radon, and environmental hazards.

How can local Associations help ensure safe working conditions?

Every local should have a health and safety committee to keep track of local, state, and federal laws. These committees can act as watchdogs over the school districts, making sure safeguard standards are met.

Your Association can reinforce the committee by bargaining for stronger environmental safety standards.

Get the community involved by enlisting the support of groups like the PTA. Together, you can be a powerful voice the district can't ignore.

Can members help with NEA's lobbying effort?

Absolutely! Keep NEA informed of innovative techniques you've tried or problems you've had to face. The best kind of testimony we can give Congress is the personal stories of our members. These stories strike home.

We're also interested in any data or surveys you've collected.

How can members get a good information resource?

NEA helped develop an excellent handbook issued by the EPA. *Environmental Hazards in Schools** lists the problems a school employee may face.

Remember, our folks have certain rights—the right to proper protective clothing and training, the right to file a complaint (without fear of retaliation) if the school district has not met safety standards, and the right to information about the chemicals in the schools.

*Available for $2 from the EPA Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), Environmental Protection Agency (TS-799), Washington, DC 20460—ask for publication #2DT-2001.

Safety First

The scene is a high school auto shop in Las Vegas, Nevada. The inspectors move around carefully, noting whether gasoline is properly stored, the car is safely up on blocks, and tools are put away. If the conditions are right—and that means safe—school food service manager Carol Everett can give her approval.

What does a cafeteria worker know about auto shops? "If she's a member of the Safety Committee, she has to know a great deal," says Everett.

Everett and three other support employees—maintenance head Floyd Mundt, clerical assistant Barbara Manning, and custodian Shirley Hildebrandt—make up the Safety Advisory Committee for the district's 122 schools.

In 1987, members of the Education Support Employees Association of Clark County (ESEA) bargained the safety committee into their contract.

"Things weren't happening at the administrative level. Requests

were overlooked,'' recalls Everett. ''We felt if we could participate in the planning and development stage, we could make sure things happened.''

Over the past four years, ESEA has watched the number of well-trained employees increase and the number of accidents decrease.

''We provide a safety video for all new employees, a guide to chemicals used in school buildings, training for asbestos removal, a safety program for bus drivers—you name it,'' says Mundt.

''Our work goes beyond just ensuring safe conditions for classified employees,'' adds Everett. ''We want to make sure there are no unsafe chalkboards that might fall on a teacher or unsafe sandboxes where students might be injured.

''Knowing you have the right to safety is important for staff and children alike.''

No corner of 122 Las Vegas schools is safe from their eyes: (left to right) Safety Committee members Floyd Mundt, Barbara Manning, and Carol Everett.

Jim Decker

For Help—It's COSH, b'Gosh!

In many states and regions, you can turn to a ''COSH'' (Committee—or Coalition or Council or Center—on Occupational Safety and Health). These groups offer hot lines, training, education, legal and technical assistance, and other kinds of support on specific aspects of workplace health and safety, or for specific audiences. The Santa Clara, California, office, for example, offers materials and training in Spanish and some Asian languages.

A few of the COSH offices are listed below. For others, check the blue (government) pages in your phone book, under ''occupational health and safety,'' or check with occupational health or labor groups in your area.

CACOSH (Chicago COSH)
37 S. Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60607
312/666-1611

ConnectiCOSH
P.O. Box 231107
Hartford, CT 06123
203/549-1877

LACOSH (Los Angeles COSH)
2501 S. Hill St.
Los Angeles, CA 95007
213/383-4416

MassCOSH (Massachusetts COSH)
718 Huntington Ave.
Boston, MA 02115
617/565-7164

SCCOSH (Santa Clara COSH)
760 N. First St.
San Jose, CA 95112
408/998-4050

TNCOSH (Tennessee COSH)
1515 E. Magnolia, #406
Knoxville, TN 37917
615/525-3147

What we want

Reed Hoffmann

School Reform Brings New Roles to ESP

As schools restructure, support staff like Greece, New York, parapro Gail Chambers (above, right) become more "mission-oriented." That is, they're asking, "How does my work relate to the school's mission to educate?"

Q&A: What Do You Do That's New?

Greece, New York, is an NEA Learning Lab* district—that means it's seeing lots of educational change. Ask the instructional aides at West Ridge Elementary, "When your school's restructuring, what do you do that you haven't done before?"

These are the answers you get:

- ► We're asked for creative ideas about working one-on-one with students.
- ► We participate in planning with teachers.
- ► We offer noncurricular before-school activities, like needlepoint, basket weaving, story hour, canvas crafts.
- ► We have time freed up for instruction because volunteers (including teachers' moms!) help out with clerical and lunch duties.
- ► We're part of the evaluation process for our colleagues.
- ► We have our own staff development, taught by the teachers—for example, a session on a writing workshop they attended.
- ► We have roles that aren't prescribed in detail. As needs change, we move from one classroom to another, for more or less time.
- ► Overall, we're given the trust to work with students and be creative through our own learning/teaching styles and collaborative skills.

—Instructional aides Gail Chambers, Marlene DeSantis, Darlene Holland, Deborah Kushner, Jacquie Law, Beverly Whelehan; nurse Diane Levin; school secretary Nancy Henchen, rapporteur. All are members of the Association of Greece Classified Educational Personnel.

Members of The Team

In Fairbanks, Alaska, members of the Education Support Staff Association (ESSA) at Ticasuk Brown Elementary School praise their TABS* team's mix of teachers, ESP, and administrators.

"It's my observation," says ESSA officer and Ticasuk Brown school secretary Susan Annis, "that a mixed team lets ESP insert their opinions into the discussion before some decisions are made—maybe not curriculum decisions, but decisions in appropriate areas. That wouldn't have happened before."

Beth Aune, music teacher and TABS coordinator for the Fairbanks Education Association, suggests one area where ESP input is invaluable: "Support staff are as critical to management of students as teachers are."

In fact, the TABS team at Ticasuk Brown has focused on behavioral expectations of students. Says custodian Mike Wason, head of the team's subcommittee on the physical environment: "We took an approach that was obvious to me: Kids should learn to be responsible for what happens on their own time, not leave it to someone else."

Leanne Ingle, library assistant and acting librarian, is the other ESP member of the TABS team. She sees long-term benefits from the cross-connections: "There've been more bridges built than would ever have occurred otherwise, no matter how long we two groups worked in the same building."

"We find that teachers are more and more aware of the two-tier pay system for teachers and ESP," says Ingle. "And more and more they disapprove of it."

* Chickasha, Oklahoma, and Greece, New York, became NEA Learning Lab districts in 1989. As of summer 1991, the NEA has designated one program in each of 18 states as a bellwether Learning Laboratory. The NEA supplies a small amount of funds and consultation to Learning Lab programs.

NEA's TABS (Team Approach to Better Schools) program is a series of school-based projects. NEA helps persuade school districts to commit the resources to achieve the goals the TABS teams set for their schools.

In California, a Key Man Mentors

Last school year, Mark Van Cleve, maintenance person/locksmith for the Ventura (California) Unified School District, found out what it was like to make an instructional impact: he had his first student apprentice.

The student, high school senior Scott Kilbride, was participating in a new apprentice program designed by a counselor for learning-disabled students (''these kids are more 'hands-on' than 'on paper,''' Van Cleve explains). The kids work for two hours a day, for academic credit, with school employees.

''Now Scott's got a leg up on the locksmith's trade,'' Van Cleve says. ''More important, when the year ended, he knew he'd be missed. He'd become a part of our work group.''

''And I found out what teachers feel when they know they've affected someone's life for the better.''

Redesigning Teaching Space From the Custodian's Angle

At Chickasha Intermediate School, in NEA's Oklahoma Learning Lab* district, head custodian Harold Williams liked the idea of using the H-shaped building's four quadrants as they were meant to be used: to house students by grade level.

And Williams' opinion counted.

Because of the Learning Lab, both the Chickasha Association of School Employees (which Williams heads) and the Chickasha United Teachers Association have contract language specifying that the district will participate with the local in site-based decision making.

Williams is a member of the district's site-based decision-making committee.

The Intermediate School staff, meeting together to make decisions about their school, considered the change in building use last school year.

''There's a science room in each quadrant, so putting a whole grade together would be easy,'' Williams explains. Moreover, he adds: ''I told the teachers that grouping by grade level would reduce downtime—time between classes, time to goof off in the corridors. When the bell rings, the kids can just cross the hall.''

The Chickasha staff agreed. This year the kids at Chickasha Intermediate will spend more time learning, less in the halls.

Lisa Rudy Hoke

In Chickasha, Oklahoma, custodian Harold Williams, teacher Mary Jeffries, and principal Vicky Clear survey the physical context of learning.

What we want

When Bargaining Falters, There's Strength in Numbers

Contract negotiations between NEA support staff members and the school board in Canisteo, New York, seemed hopelessly stalled. But the Canisteo NEA members had a not-so-secret weapon: strength in numbers. Their all-inclusive, wall-to-wall NEA local affiliate—the Canisteo Teachers Association (CTA)-Canisteo Educational Support Personnel Association (CESPA)—includes both education support staff and teachers.

Thanks to the local's size—more than 150 members—Canisteo support staff were able to try some imaginative public relations tactics that would simply not have been do-able had the 36 Canisteo support staff been negotiating solo, says Doris Van Fleet, the Canisteo support staff chair.

Canisteo support staff began negotiating for their first contract back in October 1989. The bargaining talks went nowhere, while the district poured money into legal fees. Finally negotiations ceased altogether, and the issues went to factfinding.

Canisteo NEA members, meanwhile, decided to reach out to the so far uninterested community. The local rented two lighted signs and placed them downtown, in spots where large numbers of people would see them daily. Messages were updated continuously to keep taxpayers informed. Sure enough, public interest began to increase.

The union members also organized a "Red Day": a day everyone dressed in red. They wore "Diddly Squat" buttons to show their opinion of the district's offers. They also wore red T-shirts bearing the local's initials, to work and to school board meetings.

The NEA local then went on to open an information center where the public could pick up materials to read, or just stop in to talk. Staffed by members working in pairs, the center stayed open several nights a week and on Saturdays.

CTA-CESPA members gathered outside school board meetings, often chanting slogans as board members arrived. Both faculty and support staff members spoke out in the board meetings, voicing their concerns and bringing issues to public attention.

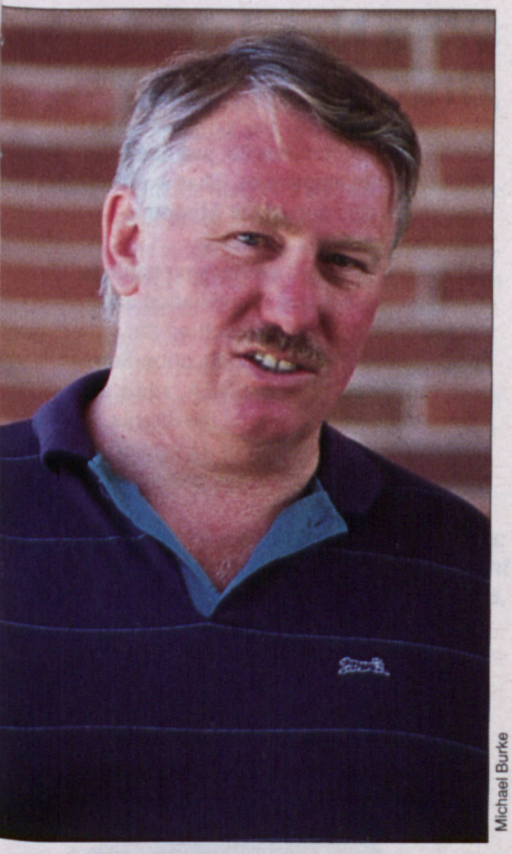
The public listened. Local citizens formed a group to try to sort out the issues and act as a liaison between the school district and union members.

These discussions helped resolve many of the outstanding issues. Finally, in May 1991, the Canisteo local got a contract proposal members could ratify with dignity.

"This first negotiation has been grueling, but it's brought CTA and CESPA closer together than ever," says CESPA's Van Fleet. "I don't know where we'd be if we hadn't been able to work so well together."

Sign of the times: CTA-CESPA members (from left) Jean Brown, Marcia Rovnikar, Cathy Flint, and Lois York with an up-to-date message for the school board. Illuminated after dark, the sign kept passersby informed night and day.

Jack Schamel



Michael Burke

School employee leader Tim Whipple

Q&A: Unity—A Teacher's View

Tim Whipple, president of the inclusive Shasta Secondary Education Association in Redding, California, brings a teacher's perspective to the advantages of support staff-teacher unity.

Are ESP members equal partners in your Association?
Our 280 teacher members have a good partnership with our 75 classified employees. It's brought more respect from management.

We also carry out the partnership in governance. I work with vice presidents from both the classified and the teacher ranks, and support staff are represented on our executive council.

What are some of the advantages of teacher-ESP cooperation?
Management can't play one against the other. Management doesn't try and bully ESP members any more. We used to see it happen, but we couldn't help because we weren't their legal rep.

How does this partnership work in bargaining?
One teacher serves as a member of the ESP bargaining team and one classified employee serves as a member of the teacher bargaining team. That works well because the two groups complement each other. For instance, the teachers refused to sign their last contract until classified staff were satisfied with theirs.

Do the classified employees help the teachers in bargaining?
Absolutely. Their moral and verbal support comes in very handy when bargaining comes around. And classified staff have access to a lot of information—from accounting to district records—that's very helpful, too.

Working Smart, Working Together

At every level of involvement, teacher-ESP unity is making a difference for both groups together.

► Louisiana ESP Board member Vera Brooks says teacher-support staff locals in her state have been lobbying for pay raises for ESP. The Louisiana Association of Educators-NEA has formed a broad-based coalition with the Louisiana Parent-Teacher Association and the Louisiana School Board Association to achieve a 12 percent salary increase and a minimum salary schedule for all ESP.

► Pinellas County (Florida) ESP President Michelle Zito cites the way ESP serve as liaisons to key teacher groups, and vice versa. As ESP president, she automatically assumes a seat on the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association Board of Directors. At the end of the year the two groups have a joint meeting (with barbecue) of their building rep councils. There's also a joint PAC committee.

But what's really exciting, says Zito, is the way ESP are participating in the district's innovative site-based decision making.

► Members of the Las Virgenes Classified Association (LVCA) in Agoura Hills, California, got teachers to go to bat for them this year when there was talk of pink slips for teaching assistants, says LVCA President Audrey Meyers.

The teachers didn't mince words: "Fire those teaching assistants," they threatened, "and we'll file a grievance charging you've changed our workload." The teaching assistants' jobs were saved.

Pinellas County's Zito talks about the good feelings between the two groups of classroom specialists. "It feels really great that teachers consult us about any decision on supportive services," she concludes. "We're just one big family."

Ten Tips for Making A Coalition Work

1. Define your issues clearly.
2. Build a constituency and recruit allies.
3. Select coalition leaders from all the allied groups.
4. Devise a clear plan of action.
5. Divide up tasks among the groups.
6. Set a specific timetable.
7. Enlist experts to support the coalition's case.
8. Involve the media in presenting the case.
9. Keep all coalition members informed and involved.
10. Communicate the results to the member constituencies.

What we want

Too often, having a right isn't enough. Faced with unfair district policies or administrators who deny their rights, support staff are fighting back. Through Association-backed grievances and lawsuits, they're marking off the boundaries, telling employers: Beyond this point you may not go.

No Medication Without Certification

There oughta be a law—and in Rhode Island, there is. For about a decade, state legislation has protected school support staff from giving medication.

Rhode Island school health workers must be "nurse-teachers"—and the state supreme court says that means registered nurses, not LPNs.

The Rhode Island Commissioner of Education says the responsibility of giving medication falls to the nurse-teacher. And NEA Rhode Island has reinforced the point by making it known that no other school employee giving medication is covered by the Association's liability insurance. The state's principals also refuse to give medication.

Rhode Island now has 168 nurse-teachers, all RNs with masters'-level degrees in education.

East Providence secretary Ruth Simoes is vice-chair of NEA's ESP Caucus. "Of course," says Simoes, "in this economy there's been pressure to repeal the law. But we know our state's a leader in this field. We don't intend to let that position go."

A Bitter Pill

Support staff don't swallow the notion that it's their job to give kids medical care. Administrators' attempts to ram these frightening duties down their throats have brought resistance, from Colorado to Rhode Island, Illinois to Georgia.

The following letter to NEA from a school secretary expresses the dilemma of conscientious school employees who are asked to perform duties they fear will harm the students.

I am very dedicated to my school. I attended it as a child, and all three of my children attended it. My youngest is still enrolled here.

I pride myself on doing the very best that I can. I try to always demonstrate a positive attitude. However, sometimes this is quite a challenge. My greatest concern is having to administer medication and first aid to students. There is just too much liability. I am not a health care professional and have no desire to be one.

This assignment is not fair to the secretaries. The safety and well-being of the students are of priority with us. We just do not have the time to properly attend to this matter.

We are, at my school, blessed with a principal who will always help us out when he is not too busy. There are, unfortunately, administrators in this business who feel that they are far above helping out.

We need help desperately. I don't want to wait until some legal problem arises before we correct the problem.

I love my job, and I love my school. I just feel that to expect secretaries to perform these medical duties is expecting entirely too much and putting us at legal risk.

Lindy Lacey,
Ellenwood, Georgia

Who Needs a Union?

Confidential secretaries do, just like other school district employees. That was the unanimous decision of the Missouri Supreme Court this spring.

The victory ended a three-year battle in which the state board of mediation and the county court lined up behind the Parkway Association of Education Support Personnel, Missouri NEA, while an intermediate court favored the district.

At stake was the right of 41 (out of some 265) secretaries to the protection of union membership.

"The trouble began before we were even certified as a bargaining unit," recalls Joan Shaver, who's headed PAESP since its formation in 1987. "The district had challenged many names on the list of eligible members local organizers submitted, but the state board of mediation upheld the list in its entirety.

"We'd agreed from the beginning that the secretaries to the superintendents and

Wayne Crosslin

in the personnel department wouldn't be eligible,'' Shaver points out. ''State law excludes anyone who deals directly with labor relations and management activities.

''But the district wanted to take out the secretaries to principals, coordinators, directors, and managers—and the executive secretaries.'' As soon as PAESP won the right to bargain, the district filed suit to exclude those employees.

''The state Supreme Court has seven members, and every one of them voted on our side,'' notes Shaver. ''That's what makes us the proudest.''

They defended the right to join a union: (clockwise from front) PAESP President Joan Shaver, Treasurer Judy Costanza, Secretary Myerna Michaels, and Vice-President Shirley Stein.

Q&A: The Rights Response

Larry Weaver

Louisiana teachers aide Wanda Rhodes is the ESP chair of her local, the Terrebonne Association of Educators. In her state, school employees' unions don't have the right to bargain. Rhodes has a few things to say about defending members' rights in a tough situation.

How did you get a grievance procedure?

In 1990 our local struck 41 days. That's a long time to walk—the board never thought we'd do it.

Now, though we're still not a recognized bargaining agent, we work out the individual contracts through an elected committee. Last year the board printed our contracts with a no-strike clause, but we just took black markers and scratched them out. They saw they couldn't play games with us.

How have the contracts helped you?

Before, we'd think we had a policy backing us, and they'd say, ''Oh, no. We changed that two meetings ago.''

Now an employee committee votes on each policy change. The school board still has final say, but they have to tell us if they go against our recommendation.

Is it working?

Last May the committee recommended 14 policies and the board passed all 14.

What kind of policies have you gotten?

We have seniority rights for ESP in writing for the first time.

Does the grievance procedure make a difference?

It sure does. Before, they could tell an aide to go clean a toilet, and she had to do it or be discharged. Now, if we're told to do something that's outside our job description, we can just say, ''I will do this, but I will grieve it.''

We've won about 75 percent of the grievances. So when we say, ''I will file a grievance,'' they back off and say, ''Well, now, let's talk about it.''

How did you get the other changes through the school board?

It's a 15-member board. When we saw they weren't going to change, we worked in the next elections and got 10 of them replaced.

I think the town woke up and said, ''We've done some injustices to our employees, and it was a mistake. You do get better work if the employees are satisfied.''

What's your next goal?

A collective contract instead of individual ones.

What we want

How do you measure the value of work? When it's work in school, NEA has a way that's working.

NEA's Job Evaluation System takes into account factors in educational jobs that most evaluation systems leave out—like responsibilities for programs, and the personal contacts that are so vital in many school jobs. Organizing work—not just doing it—is another aspect of many educational jobs that's recognized by the NEA system but left out of job assessments that aren't tailored to schools.

NEA's system also takes into account special kinds of effort, like those required to spend long periods working with symbols on a VDT screen, or to transcribe tapes, or to perform precise kitchen operations. It looks at the complexity of a job—how many, how diverse, and how difficult the tasks are.

As for knowledge and skills, the NEA system counts the full range a job may require, not just the obvious ones.

Supervisors Sign On

Yes! say supervisors at Appleton, Wisconsin's Fox Valley Technical College, when employees present the job assessment forms they've filled out. They don't just agree on the descriptions of work—in a process without precedent, they literally sign on, on the dotted line.

And this at an institution where, says local Association President Yvonne Matz, "It was a long time before the administration agreed even to look at the NEA job assessment. In the beginning, they wanted us to use whatever survey they decided on."

The shift in philosophy that enabled the administration to accept the NEA system was the start of a long process.

The college's 222 employees hold jobs ranging from cook to systems analyst. During the first three months of 1991, they filled out questionnaires on just what responsibilities go with those jobs.

"It took that long," notes Matz, "because our jobs are so diversified we can't cluster as much as most."

Next problem: supervisors often argue with job surveys employees write. They don't know or won't admit that workers are tackling all those tasks. So the local, relying on the strong relationship among the sectors of the college, took a risk.

Each job questionnaire had a simple cover sheet. Supervisors could note their opinion that the employee's response was inaccurate—but they did so on fewer than 10 percent of the jobs. Of those, most ended with a note that supervisor and employee had talked over their differences and worked out agreements.

In the end, disputes remained on only a half-dozen questionnaires.

Now the questionnaires have been coded, and if both sides accept the coding, the local will go on to bargain a new pay structure. Fox Valley Tech is the first technical college in the country to go through the NEA pay equity process.

Equalizing Resources

► "Fair Pay: We're Worth It." Describes NEA's pay equity program. Free. NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. 202/822-7700.

► "Pay Equity Bibliography and Resource List." Cites over 100 publications. $4. National Committee for Pay Equity, 1126 16th St., N.W., Suite 411, Washington, DC 20036. 202/331-7343.

Q&A: Money Matters

Jim Decker

Barbara Young is an in-house suspension aide in Las Vegas. Young says the pay equity settlement bargained by the Education Support Employees Association of Clark County, Nevada, has "changed my life completely."

How?
I can save money without even missing it.
What has that meant?
I just got myself a car, and the payments aren't hurting my paycheck. I've gotten an annuity that comes out of my check, and I don't miss *those* payments either.
Has your family noticed any difference?
My daughter, 22, is a teacher aide with the district. She's got an equity adjustment of her own, and she's using it to go back to school.
What's the next thing you'll do with the extra money?
Take some counseling classes. I've been wanting to and couldn't afford it.
What about long-term plans?
As the increases come, I'll increase my annuity payments and my check won't feel it.

How They Did It In Oregon

"We knew there were inequities in the system," says bus driver and cook's assistant Mary Davis. "And we knew NEA had a program that could help."

Davis is president of the Greater Albany Association of Classified Employees, which represents some 325 people in Albany, Oregon, near Salem. "We asked the Oregon Education Association to help us, and they agreed," she notes. "We're a varied group, with varied work times, so we had separate meetings to fill out the job surveys. The forms took from an hour to two and a half hours to fill out, depending on the job.

"People brought notes to remember everything they do. It's easy to forget about something you do every day."

The meetings brought some surprises, Davis says. "The program assistants and educational assistants found out they needed to trade titles. And the special ed and regular bus drivers found they had the same amount of responsibility because a regular bus has so many passengers."

The Association's nationwide links paid off. After the OEA coded the survey results for the relative value of each job, a special team of ESP in the Massachusetts Teachers Association tested the findings.

The hard work is bearing fruit: Greater Albany's new contract, up for ratification this month, provides the money to carry out its settlement; the pay equity committee will decide how to divide it up.

Orange County Makes Lemonade

What do you do when you've found out what everybody does and used the NEA job assessment process to measure its value to the employer—and the district says there's no money for the raises that would actually create pay equity?

Go on working on the classifications, and go on bargaining the way equity will be carried out, say members of Florida's Orange County Education Support Personnel Association.

"For example," says OESPA President Ruby Strickland, "we can get upgrade criteria, job descriptions—things that have to be done before the pay is settled anyway. And we want to see the pay scale condensed from the 13 steps and 26 pay grades we've got now to something more reasonable."

But—the money? The district has agreed to set up separate funding for equity so it won't cut into regular raises. It's also committed, in the last contract, to start actually implementing equity this school year. In this year's interim pay negotiation, OESPA is watching to make sure that happens—and not in any token way.

OESPA President Ruby Strickland (right) and Immediate Past President Pearl Price Eldridge: there's no stopping them now—and no stopping their 6,500 colleagues in Orange County, Florida. NEA's Orange County ESP local has a pay equity agreement; now members want to see the money.

Photos: Joe Di Dio

What we want

When Subcontracting Is a Good Thing

In Muskegon, Michigan, the Reeths-Puffer school board decided in June to contract out food service management—and their 22 food service workers couldn't have been happier. As it happened, the contract was awarded to them.

Effective this coming fall, the food service workers—all members of the Reeths-Puffer Education Support Personnel Association—will, as crew leader Sue Wiggers says, "run the show."

Mark Piscotty

Crew leader Sue Wiggers

"For years, the administration here has been looking at cutting management costs," Wiggers explains. "This year, when they decided to let the food service director go, we took the opportunity to say, 'Why don't you let us run the program?'"

Wiggers says she and her colleagues have been preparing for this chance. They've been certified by the Michigan School Food Service Association. Several have taken management classes. Most were active in the district's recent strategic planning sessions.

So last spring they submitted a detailed proposal. The school board reviewed it—and compared it to two bids from outside contractors. On June 17, the board voted to keep the work in the Reeths-Puffer family.

"I think this is going to be a first," Wiggers says. "I know we can make it work. And if we can make it work, chances are a lot of other people can make it work, too."

NEA Today will keep members informed on the progress of this groundbreaking strategy.

Keeping outside contractors out of school districts has kept a lot of local Associations busy this past year. A few examples of recent successes:

► In **Missouri,** the Francis Howell School District terminated its five-year contract with ServiceMaster in midstream, citing high costs. The two-year-old contract had called on ServiceMaster to manage the district's 90 custodial, grounds, and maintenance workers.

The district now plans to hire its own managers, which pleases the employees, represented by the Francis Howell Maintenance, Grounds, and Custodial Local #1. They never wanted ServiceMaster in the first place.

► In **Pennsylvania,** members of the Beaver Falls Educational Support Personnel Association convinced their school district not to subcontract custodial, maintenance, and cafeteria services last year.

Their strategy, gleaned from NEA's manual, *Contracting Out: Strategies for Fighting Back* (see box), involved educating the entire membership, attending board meetings and asking tough questions, and finally, presenting their case

NEA

directly to the board.

When a neighboring district—the Riverside Beaver County school system—considered subcontracting the management of their cafeteria, workers contacted the Beaver Falls ESPA for guidance. Using similar techniques and arguments, Riverside employees were successful in convincing their district that subcontracting was not the way to go.

► In **Nevada**, the Clark County school district developed a proposal last winter to allow outside fast food chains to run the cafeterias in three new senior high schools.

Pressure from Education Support Employees Association members—and a supportive student boycott of Pizza Hut lunches—helped convince administrators subcontracting would not be popular among employees or community members. A bid from an outside vendor convinced the district subcontracting wouldn't be economical either.

Food service in their district has just been subcontracted. Why are these Muskegon, Michigan, food service workers smiling?

Mark Piscotty

Q&A: Fight, Not Flight

NEA Today *spoke with Teresa Rankin, NEA's resident expert on ESP issues, to get a national perspective on subcontracting.*

Think back over the last five years. Are you seeing more or less subcontracting?
More. And I think we'll see even more attempts in the next five.

What's causing this upsurge?
A combination of factors. First, school districts are always looking to cut budgets. Today's state budget crises add more urgency to that search.

Second, the leading private contractors are looking for new markets and are actively contacting school districts.

Third, national companies are changing their tactics. When they can't influence school boards, they're wining and dining central office finance managers. They're going after the bean counters.

And fourth, the political climate is changing—for the worse. The Bush Administration is pushing for "more market-oriented and performance-based education."

What's that mean?
They want privatization. They say anybody can run a public school—if we redefine "public." And when President Bush says anybody can run a "public" school, we can be sure he's not talking about maintaining public sector ESP jobs.

Who are the major subcontractors today?
School districts used to contract out to small, local companies. Now, we're seeing an increase in the number of national corporations interested in contracting out. We're hearing a lot about ServiceMaster (custodial/maintenance), Marriott (custodial, maintenance, and grounds), ARA Services (food service), and Ryder (transportation).

Are Association locals successful in fighting subcontracting efforts?
Locals that mobilize their membership, use their contract, and organize their community are most successful in defeating contracting out.

Workers in the affected classification can't usually win on their own, so the locals that involve the most people—including all ESP and teacher members—are going to have the best chance.

Can a local do anything to prevent talk of subcontracting?
Yes. Elect school board members you know oppose subcontracting and monitor the political situation.

And, on the job, look for ways your operation can function more efficiently. Answer the tough questions before they're asked, and you'll help keep your operation competitive.

Fighting Back

To win a battle against subcontracting, you need to:

► educate your members
► develop sound arguments
► know and use your contractual rights
► use legal strategies if appropriate
► get the community involved
► use the media.

To provide background information and lots of practical advice, NEA recently published *Contracting Out: Strategies for Fighting Back*. For a free copy, write to Teresa Rankin, NEA Membership and Affiliate Services, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

What we want

To some employees, a good contract means decent pay—maybe more than merely decent. To some, it's job security. Others look to collective bargaining for health insurance, fair treatment, realistic job descriptions, guaranteed hours of work. Wherever the law allows school employees to bargain contracts, NEA ESP members are making negotiations a shelter for hard times and a path to a better future.

Bob Chase

A new contract took fear out of the workday for members of the Lansing Educational Assistants. A gathering of Lansing educators: from right, LEA President Steve Cook and Secretary Mary Seida; NEA Director Barb Schram; former LEA Vice President Joyce Schellhammer; Michigan Education Association Director at-Large Jane Miller.

Uniform Rights

The Washington County, Maryland, schools wanted uniformity in some groups of employees. Specifically, they required food service workers, like maintenance workers, to wear uniforms—and a different color each day of the week.

But the district wasn't uniform about the uniforms. Maintenance workers got a uniform allowance; food service workers didn't.

"It became an issue of sex equity," says Linda Dunn, president of the Washington County Educational Classified Employees Association. "The food service workers—incidentally the lowest paid of all our job categories—are all women, and the maintenance workers, all men."

Would the cafeteria workers get the allowances? The issue loomed so large that during contract negotiations, it brought WCECEA and the district to impasse.

WCECEA won. The district must now give each cafeteria worker $180 a year for uniforms.

Not Doctors and Don't Wannabe

Daily tasks are no longer a life-and-death matter for the 600 members of the Lansing (Michigan) Education Assistants (LEA).

Time was, principals could require them to perform a medical procedure—a tracheotomy suction, a catheterization, stomach-tube feeding—on a student. No doctor or nurse would be around. Worst of all, the school employees got very little training.

"In fact," notes LEA President Steve Cook, "one person was trained over the phone."

But the LEA's new contract put a stop to that. While principals can still require education assistants to perform such procedures, a letter of agreement improves the conditions under which they do so.

The assistants now receive "very substantial training," says Cook. They perform procedures only when a doctor or nurse is nearby or just a phone call away.

What's more, Cook points out, the assistants received a considerable pay increase for performing these services.

The district holds that a 1984 U.S. Supreme Court decision gives it the right to assign assistants to perform medical procedures.

"In *Irving (Texas) Independent School District vs. Tatro*, the Court ruled that providing a catheter for a multihandicapped student was a relatively simple procedure that could be done by a lay person with less than an hour's training," notes Cook.

Good Contracts

Q&A: A Tough Year, but . . .

Eva McLain of NEA's Pacific Regional Office negotiates contracts for school support employees.

Is there anything new in bargaining this year—anything that hasn't shown up before?

California, where I negotiate, is in the throes of a budget crisis. There's not a lot of money for education.

As a result, districts are trying to take away benefits. It takes a strong fight to get back to the level of the previous contract.

What benefits are prime targets?

Health care is by far the most popular. But districts are also trying to reduce vacation time, the number of holidays—they'd like to just strip the entire contract.

In some cases, they're trying to reduce the number of work hours. That would let them cut the pay—and they don't have to provide benefits unless employees work a minimum number of hours.

What about salary?

We're having to fight harder for less. Increases are ranging from 2.5 percent to 6 percent. Before, they were 8 or 9 percent, sometimes 10.

How are school support employees reacting?

Our members are strong, particularly at the bargaining table. They communicate well with their constituents, and they're willing to set priorities and stick with them.

In the end, we're winning.

Building on Firm Foundations

In Vermont, the 55 support staff members of the Colchester Education Association became members of the NEA family more than four years ago. Two years ago they got a contract.

What was going on all that time? Tough bargaining.

ESP Unit Chair and Vice President-Elect Deena Beam explains: "The board insisted on allowing management to discipline and dismiss staff without just cause. They were trying to limit our right to binding arbitration. And they wanted to impose a two-tiered health insurance plan."

But that wasn't all.

"I've heard that the board admitted it was trying to demoralize and, if possible, bust our local," Beam says.

Determination—and support from their fellow NEA members—got the Colchester support employees through those hard times.

"Teachers walked an informational picket with us, sat on our bargaining team, even allocated money to offset our dues for those two-and-a-half years—because our wages were frozen," says Beam.

With that kind of backing, the group held firm. They got their contract. There was a small salary increase. Perhaps more important: the district allocated $20,000 for salary equalization. Colchester support members are now conducting a pay equity study to help determine how that money will be distributed.

As they prepare to start bargaining on their second contract, the Colchester ESP are looking for support further from home. Beam and her fellow workers are studying the contracts of employees with similar jobs in other districts.

Beam's sister, a California guidance secretary, has sent a copy of her contract. So has the sister of another Colchester member—she's the president of another NEA local.

"Looking at their contracts and talking with them have helped us establish our priorities for our next negotiations," says Beam.

'Win-Win' Bargaining: No Pain, Some Gain

Custodian Robert Auer, president of the 29-member Dalton (Illinois) Support Personnel Cooperative Association No. 149, just tried bargaining a contract for the first time—and liked it.

Auer's first negotiations could have been a disaster. Three years ago his local's bargaining team ended up alone in a room. The administration team was in another room, and a mediator was shuttling in between.

But this time, explains Auer, who's head custodian at Berger-Brandenberg Elementary School, the NEA-affiliated Cooperative Teachers Association had just successfully used the "win-win" concept to bargain their contract.

"A new superintendent and a new school board dropped all the barriers that go with traditional bargaining," says Auer. "The new process went so well with the teachers that the administration extended the same philosophy to meeting with us."

The sessions were informal—very. Team members listed the subjects they wanted to discuss, while the school superintendent wrote their ideas on an easel.

But the bargaining wasn't just pleasant—it was productive. The new three-year contract gives members what they wanted most: no sick-day charge for job-related injuries and double pay for working when outside groups rent the school for meetings and activities.

What we want

Make Things Happen!

Whether it's a budget issue, a bill in the state legislature, or a school board or Congressional election, the key to victory in politics is organization. Here are some steps to building political success:

- ► Lobby your legislators and school board members.
- ► Use the media.
- ► Organize coalitions for support—there's strength in numbers.
- ► Stay informed—gather information about candidates' voting records and the background of bills.
- ► Organize your members to testify, write letters, or work in voter registration campaigns.
- ► Get out the vote.

Rights Fights

Around the country, NEA affiliates are taking political action to get support staff decent pay and working conditions:

- ► In Nevada, the statewide Education Support Employees Association, together with the Nevada Education Association, has issued report cards for legislators and run ads in the state newspapers.
- ► In Louisiana, the Louisiana Association of Educators has made salary increases for school support personnel a top legislative priority.
- ► A bill backed by the New Jersey Education Association pushing for retirement benefits for classified staff has cleared the state's house and is being considered in the senate.

Bill Lyons

Custodian Marlene Deerfield has a way to make a difference: win a seat on the school board.

Q&A: Deerfield for School Board

School custodian Marlene Deerfield is running for the Shenango (Pennsylvania) School Board. Deerfield has an unusual edge: She's got the nominations of both the Republican and the Democratic party. The election's in November.

Why are you running for school board?
In my job I have the chance to talk to kids, and what I hear disturbs me. Many of them feel there's no reason to get interested in school: there are no opportunities for them. They're frustrated, depressed, and discouraged. At the same time, I've noticed a number of teachers who are burned out—morale's been low. I want to do something to make a difference.

You've received the nomination of both the major parties in your district. How do you feel about that?
I think it's terrific. My husband and friends worked hard at gathering signatures for the petitions for my candidacy—I feel very lucky.

What do you think your election will mean to others?
It's important for the school board to have input from every part of the school staff. I want others to realize they have every right to run for school board or any other political office. We all have a great deal to offer.

What will you do if you're elected?
Well, I'm going to work very hard. I may not know all the issues now, but I feel it's important to learn them and take part in the political process.

Will you continue working at the school?
Absolutely. I want the kids and teachers to know that if they want to speak their minds to the school board they can do it directly, through me!

I never thought I'd run for an office. I'm just a little quiet person who used to sit in the corner afraid to say *boo*, and now I'm running for the school board. My family think it's great. Maybe one day I'll set my sights even higher!

Everyone's a Winner

It was a typical election-night photo splashed across the front page of the *Delaware State News*: a victorious candidate surrounded by key supporters.

But take a closer look at those supporters. Behind the victory of Dover school board candidate Mary McKenzie was a coalition of four NEA affiliates representing Dover's school secretaries, custodians, paraprofessionals, and teachers.

"We wanted to get a different outlook represented on the board," says Sandy Mifflin, president of the Capital Education Secretaries Association (CESA). "We began talking about what we wanted to see in a candidate and decided to work toward a joint endorsement."

Together, the four locals—CESA, the Capital Paraprofessionals Association (CPA), the Capital Support Association (CSA, custodians), and the Capital Educators Association (CEA, teachers)—set up appointments with the candidates.

"We interviewed them on their feelings toward education and the children. We asked about binding arbitration and fair share. We asked whether they felt the board had a managerial or an oversight role," recalls CSA President Nate Gibbs.

"We met every week," recalls Mifflin, "until we made a selection. We never lost sight of the big picture, yet we knew that the concerns of each group were important."

"One name kept coming up in discussions," says Gibbs, "and we knew this was the person we wanted to endorse."

Endorsement was no formality. "We sent our members flyers encouraging them to get involved in the campaign," says Mifflin. "We sent our candidate to PTA meetings and other gatherings."

Gibbs pledged 100 voters for McKenzie—and personally made sure they arrived at the polls.

On election day, Sandy Mifflin watched the results come pouring in. "From the start," she recalls, "Mary McKenzie had an insurmountable lead.

"If you want the system to change, you have to get involved, whether you decide to lobby, work on a political campaign, or run yourself," concludes Mifflin. "That's the way to make things happen."

Delaware State News

Victorious: (left) Newly elected school board member Mary McKenzie is congratulated by CESA President Sandy Mifflin and (hugging McKenzie) CEA President Mary Hunter. Below, CSA President Nate Gibbs and CPA President Loretta Peer (far right) join Mifflin, Hunter, and the steering committee who helped bring victory to McKenzie.

Gary Emeigh

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WHAT

we Earn

Bus Drivers

National Average Hourly Wage, 1989-90	$9.21
National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	$9.52
Percent Wage Increase	3.4

1990-91 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	571
Low	$ 8.35
High	11.62
Average	**9.70**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	6
Low	$ 7.88
High	8.28
Average	**ND**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	19
Low	$ 7.49
High	9.67
Average	**8.58**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	908
Low	$ 10.42
High	18.38
Average	**13.76**

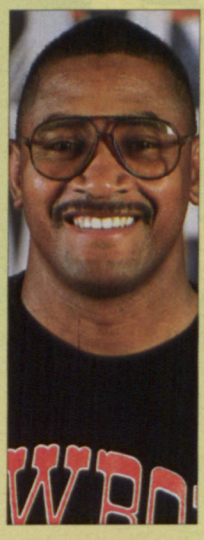
New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	4
Low	$ 8.50
High	9.50
Average	**9.25**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	41
Low	$ 5.68
High	9.70
Average	**6.85**

Hourly wage rates and salaries are presented as national averages since they are based on a nationwide survey of some 1,100 school systems. They do not, however, represent true national averages, but rather summaries of what these school districts reported to the Educational Research Service (ERS). All figures are taken from the ERS report *Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel in Public Schools, 1990-91.* © 1991 by Educational Research Service.



Name: Carl Blalark

Local Association, state: Education Support Employees Association of Clark County (Las Vegas), Nevada

Years of service: Almost 10

Current pay: $12.45 an hour

Most recent major purchase: '89 Ford Ranger, bought in November '90.

Biggest financial worry: I've got five kids I want to send to college.

Plan of action: Save money the best I can, and do all I can to make it possible.

I think I'm worth: $20 an hour—because of the work we do, the abuse we take out on the street, and the disrespect we get from a lot of people.

Cafeteria Workers

National Average Hourly Wage, 1989-90	$6.77
National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	$7.19
Percent Wage Increase	6.2

1990-91 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	456
Low	$10.48
High	13.93
Average	**11.78**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	614
Low	$ 6.21
High	8.90
Average	**6.77**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	199
Low	$ 5.63
High	$ 7.53
Average	**6.18**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	16
Low	$ 5.97
High	7.70
Average	**6.62**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	646
Low	$ 7.40
High	12.14
Average	**9.58**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	18
Low	$ 5.45
High	9.90
Average	**7.75**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	8
Low	$ 4.59
High	6.85
Average	**5.69**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	217
Low	$ 5.30
High	6.34
Average	**5.81**

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Name: Dawn Driscoll

Local Association, state: Mercer County ESP, West Virginia

Years of service: 6

Current pay: $59.65 a day, 35 hours a week, 10 months a year

Most recent major purchase: A washing machine

Biggest financial worry: Paying off the mortgage on my house.

Plan of action: Continue working hard to move up the pay scale. My local Association is meeting to talk about how to increase ESP pay.

I think I'm worth: I believe what I'm getting is fair.

Instructional Aides

National Average Hourly Wage, 1989-90	$7.43
National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	$7.77
Percent Wage Increase	4.6

1990-91 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	1,927
Low	$ 8.60
High	13.04
Average	**10.87**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	815
Low	$ 5.88
High	10.99
Average	**6.26**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	245
Low	$ 5.76
High	6.46
Average	**6.12**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	45
Low	$ 6.30
High	12.24
Average	**8.80**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	737
Low	$ 7.55
High	20.86
Average	**13.01**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	22
Low	$ 5.00
High	7.60
Average	**5.60**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	12
Low	$ 4.19
High	6.10
Average	**5.37**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	115
Low	$ 5.03
High	8.47
Average	**6.15**

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Name: Legertha Champagne

Local Association, state: Middleton Education Staff Association, Wisconsin

Years of service: 13

Current pay: $8.24 an hour, 38.75 hours a week, 9 months a year

Most recent major purchase: Clothes, I guess, but mostly catching up paying bills.

Biggest financial worry: That I won't be able to meet my obligations during the summer and in December. I have to plan ahead. This year, I'll get paid for 4 weeks of summer school; last year it was 6 weeks.

Plan of action: I'm looking at new strategies for saving. I plan to meet with an investment adviser at WEAC (the Wisconsin Education Association Council).

I think I'm worth: $10 an hour

Custodians

National Average Hourly Wage, 1989-90	$8.54
National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	$9.05
Percent Wage Increase	6.0

1990-91 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	345
Low	$10.68
High	19.10
Average	**12.90**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	420
Low	$ 6.69
High	9.35
Average	**7.52**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	105
Low	$ 7.71
High	9.47
Average	**8.66**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	26
Low	$ 6.97
High	9.01
Average	**7.45**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	686
Low	$ 8.21
High	13.78
Average	**10.69**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	23
Low	$ 8.00
High	18.16
Average	**11.89**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	15
Low	$ 4.83
High	8.45
Average	**6.86**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	201
Low	$ 4.28
High	13.24
Average	**5.39**

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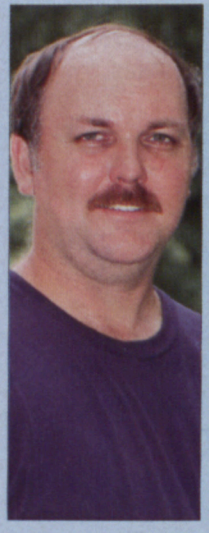

Name: Darrell Long

Local Association, state: Springfield ESP, Missouri

Years of service: 17

Current pay: $19,700 a year, 40 hours a week, 12 months a year

Most recent major purchase: A VCR we bought at Christmas time.

Biggest financial worry: My son, because he goes to a state school for the deaf, and the cost to go back and forth adds up. It's 158 miles one way, and we go to see him at least once a month. Plus, our phone bills are wild because of TTY.

Plan of action: In bargaining, we're pushing for more training for custodians, so we'll know more and be able to do more. Then we can go to the board and say, "We're more qualified and we deserve more money." Hey, grocery stores don't seem to be shy about raising their prices.

I think I'm worth: About $2,000 to $3,000 more, for my responsibilities. About the only thing I *don't* do is sweep the floors at night.

Building Secretaries

National Average Salary, 1989-90	$16,184
National Average Salary, 1990-91	$16,953
Percent Salary Increase	4.8

1990-91 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	101
Low	$22,697
High	27,470
Average	**25,921**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	85
Low	$13,620
High	22,525
Average	**18,632**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	71
Low	$12,563
High	20,051
Average	**15,706**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	10
Low	$10,513
High	19,849
Average	**16,906**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	527
Low	$13,566
High	30,885
Average	**21,069**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	11
Low	$18,415
High	31,964
Average	**26,646**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	10
Low	$8,659
High	14,331
Average	**11,430**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	48
Low	$8,873
High	18,627
Average	**13,375**

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Name: Gretchen Phillips

Local Association, state: Haakon Education Association, South Dakota

Years of service: 8

Current pay: $7.29 an hour, 40 hours a week, 10 months a year

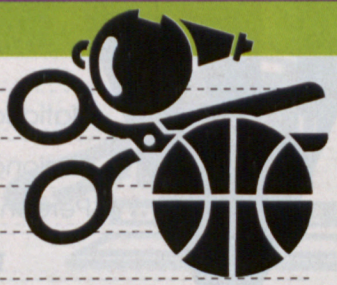
Most recent major purchase: Shades for the house.

Biggest financial worry: My child's upcoming college expenses. My oldest is 15 now. We're worried we won't be eligible for loans.

Plan of action: We're encouraging our son to go after academic scholarships. At work, I'm thinking of putting pressure on to get a raise.

I think I'm worth: More, but I've got one of the better jobs in my field. The job market here is so flooded with people willing to work for minimum wage.

Noninstructional Aides



National Average Hourly Wage, 1989-90	$7.08
National Average Hourly Wage, 1990-91	$7.43
Percent Wage Increase	4.9

1990-91 WAGES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	212
Low	$10.63
High	16.14
Average	**14.32**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	1
Low	ND
High	ND
Average	**ND**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	130
Low	$10.20
High	16.25
Average	**13.09**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	11
Low	$4.50
High	6.25
Average	**5.50**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	5
Low	$4.51
High	5.56
Average	**5.09**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	121
Low	$4.89
High	7.20
Average	**5.37**

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Name: Carmen Martinez Gonzales

Local Association, state: NEA-Española, New Mexico

Years of service: 4

Current pay: $5,000 a year

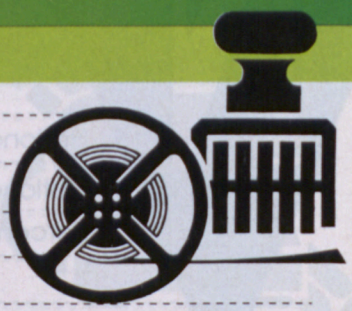
Most recent major purchase: I just had a baby, so we owe a lot of hospital bills.

Biggest financial worry: Supporting the kids so they can go to college.

Plan of action: I plan to work with my local to try and get a raise.

I think I'm worth: At least $9,000 a year.

Library Clerks



National Average Salary, 1989-90	$12,151
National Average Salary, 1990-91	$12,696
Percent Salary Increase	4.5

1990-91 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	23
Low	$23,713
High	37,088
Average	**29,802**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	89
Low	$8,952
High	15,132
Average	**11,708**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	13
Low	$10,184
High	12,632
Average	**11,188**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	3
Low	$8,883
High	13,784
Average	**11,316**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	45
Low	$13,566
High	22,652
Average	**17,068**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	3
Low	$13,811
High	27,730
Average	**19,874**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	6
Low	$5,498
High	7,145
Average	**6,201**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	8
Low	$8,984
High	11,403
Average	**9,860**

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Name: Betty Ingram

Local Association, state: Education Support Employees (Oklahoma City), Oklahoma

Years of Service: 27

Current pay: $13,400

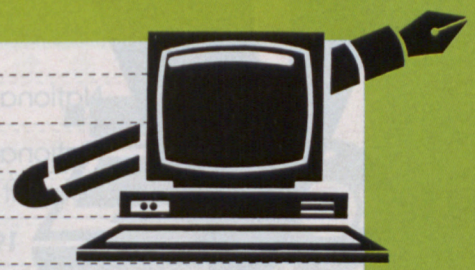
Most recent major purchase: A trailer, last year.

Biggest financial worry: If I had to depend on my salary, I couldn't survive. For the last two years I haven't had a pay raise or an increment of any kind. I see why people who work in the system have part-time jobs. But I'm lucky. My husband's retired with a good pension, and my children are all out of college.

Plan of action: Get ESE designated our bargaining agent.

I think I'm worth: A lot more than I'm getting. They hire new library clerks and call on me to show them what to do and give staff development workshops.

Central Office Secretaries



National Average Salary, 1989-90	$20,038
National Average Salary, 1990-91	$21,303
Percent Salary Increase	6.3

1990-91 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job	52
Low	$23,050
High	39,672
Average	**33,891**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job	94
Low	$14,856
High	27,408
Average	**21,208**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job	33
Low	$13,083
High	24,274
Average	**16,410**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$19,268
High	25,000
Average	**22,096**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job	97
Low	$23,754
High	52,693
Average	**35,413**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$28,815
High	32,670
Average	**31,385**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job	4
Low	$13,270
High	16,995
Average	**14,534**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job	19
Low	$13,205
High	21,750
Average	**17,470**

Hourly wage rates and salaries are presented as national averages since they are based on a nationwide survey of some 1,100 school systems. They do not, however, represent true national averages, but rather summaries of what these school districts reported to the Educational Research Service (ERS). All figures are taken from the ERS report *Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel in Public Schools, 1990-91.* © 1991 by Educational Research Service.

Name: Mary Seeland

Local Association, state: Franklin Township Education Association, New Jersey

Years of service: 12

Current pay: $20,854

Most recent major purchase: A trailer, just over a year ago

Biggest financial worry: No serious personal worries—my husband is retired, and our four children are grown. In fact, three are teachers. But I am concerned about health benefits for retired support personnel.

Plan of action: The New Jersey Education Association is backing a bill in the state legislature to get health benefits for support staff who retire with 25 years' service, and I'm working to help get that passed.

I think I'm worth: All support staff deserve pay that lets us live in dignity.

Payroll Clerks

National Average Salary, 1989-90	$20,088
National Average Salary, 1990-91	$21,202
Percent Salary Increase	5.5

1990-91 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	87
Low	$18,916
High	53,844
Average	**45,627**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	18
Low	$16,102
High	28,146
Average	**20,137**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job	21
Low	$13,187
High	18,491
Average	**15,255**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$21,000
High	32,432
Average	**25,311**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	26
Low	$21,424
High	32,885
Average	**27,347**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job	1
Low	$27,790
High	27,790
Average	**27,790**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job	3
Low	$10,982
High	13,228
Average	**12,035**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job	12
Low	$10,854
High	20,789
Average	**16,509**

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Name: Delores (Dee) Chambers

Local Association, state: Des Moines Education Association, Iowa

Years of service: 8 in payroll, 25 with school system

Current pay: $16,000 a year, 37.5 hours a week, 12 months a year

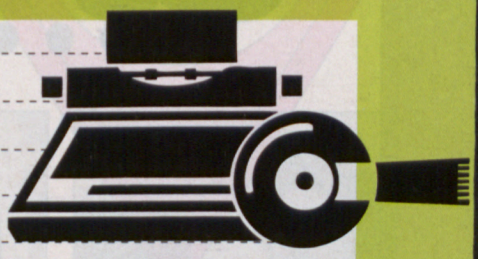
Most recent major purchase: My car—a Chevy Celebrity—2 years ago.

Biggest financial worry: I'll probably retire in 5 or 6 years, and I worry if I've got enough money for retirement. Should I take out another tax-deferred account or another investment? I just keep putting it off because I don't want to make the decision.

Plan of action: I do have an investment counselor I meet with. At work, I serve on the bargaining team.

I think I'm worth: A million dollars. But seriously...I think I'm worth more than I'm getting paid.

Clerk-Typists



National Average Salary, 1989-90	$16,125
National Average Salary, 1990-91	$16,859
Percent Salary Increase	4.6

1990-91 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

California, San Francisco
Enrollment 62,443

Number of persons in job:	218
Low	$21,185
High	29,363
Average	**25,680**

Georgia, Cobb County
Enrollment 75,177

Number of persons in job:	12
Low	$13,503
High	16,860
Average	**15,450**

Iowa, Cedar Rapids
Enrollment 17,006

Number of persons in job:	1
Low	$13,187
High	13,187
Average	**13,187**

Maine, Kennebunk
Enrollment 1,962

Number of persons in job:	1
Low	$19,268
High	19,268
Average	**19,268**

Maryland, Prince George's County
Enrollment 108,148

Number of persons in job:	64
Low	$14,883
High	32,822
Average	**24,655**

New Jersey, Burlington
Enrollment 1,489

Number of persons in job:	1
Low	$23,122
High	23,122
Average	**23,122**

South Dakota, Mitchell
Enrollment 2,775

Number of persons in job:	1
Low	$14,060
High	14,060
Average	**14,060**

Texas, Amarillo
Enrollment 25,796

Number of persons in job:	10
Low	$8,066
High	12,939
Average	**9,982**

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Name: Kathy Parker

Local Association, state: Classified Employees Association of San Diego, California

Years of service: 10.5

Current salary: $19,076

Most recent major purchase: A truck my husband and I bought for his business.

Biggest financial worry: Day-to-day living.

Plan of action: Hang in there and plug away.

I think I'm worth: I'm priceless.

a FEW FACTS FOR YOUR FILES

Total U.S. health care spending:
1990: $600 million
2000 (projected): $1.5 trillion

Health costs per person:
1991: $2,700
2000 (projected): $5,550

Number of Americans without health insurance: 33-37 million

Percentage of the uninsured who are employed full time: 62

The industrialized nations without universal health care (complete list): United States and South Africa

The industrialized nation without a comprehensive parental leave policy: United States

Elementary and secondary public school enrollment, '90-'91: 41 million

Average per pupil expenditure, '90-'91: $5,208

Estimated amount Boston Red Sox pitcher Roger Clemens will earn this season, per strikeout: $20,400

Number of children playing Little League baseball: 1.5 million

Number of adults playing Major League baseball: 650

Average top executive salary:
In 1980: 25 times the average blue-collar salary
In 1990: 91 times the average blue-collar salary

Number of Americans over 65 (in 1989): 31 million

Estimated percentage of Americans over 65 who will spend some time in a nursing home: 50

Average cost of one year in a nursing home: $30,000

Percentage of preschool children who say that if they were President they would eat ice cream for every meal: 21

Number, per week, of remarriages that involve children: 9,000

Proportion of remarriages that end in divorce: 6 out of 10

Percentage increase in number of U.S. children who are poor, 1979-1989:
Asian: 138
Hispanic: 70
White: 23
Black: 14

Percentage of high school seniors who say they—
Smoke daily: 18
Drink 5 or more drinks in a row regularly: 39
Skip school 2 or more days a month: 14
Are sexually active: 60

Percentage of all valentines that are sent by women: 85

Proportion of Saturday morning TV commercials that advertise food that can be considered "reasonably nutritious":
8 out of 222, or 3.6%

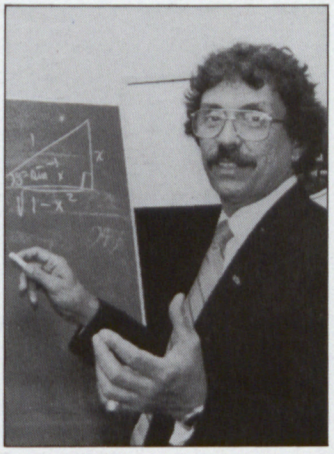
Sources: Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Estimates of School Statistics* (NEA), Families United for Senior Action, *Harper's* Magazine, National Public Radio "Family Stories."

"Sure, our interests are very special..."

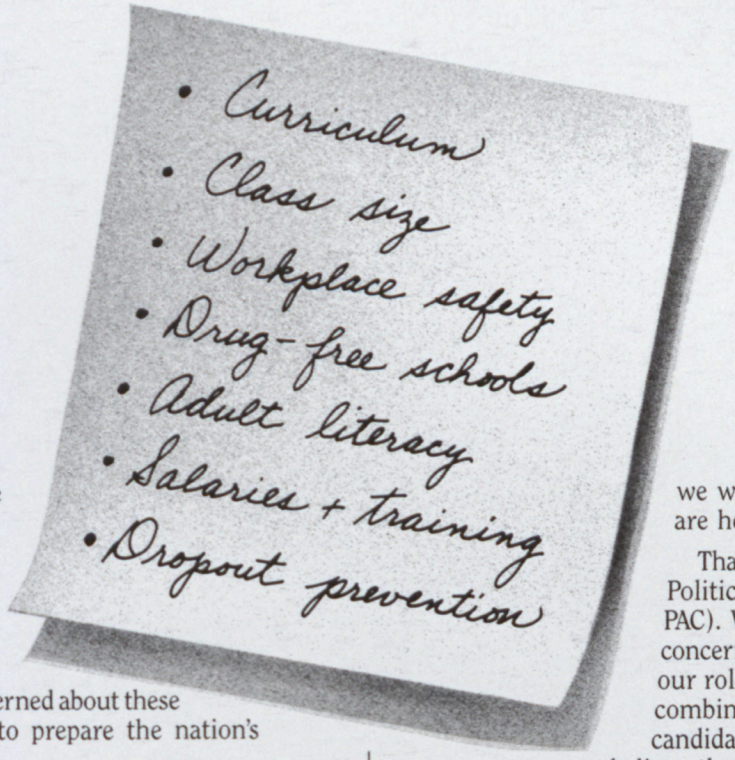
Sarajo Wilkes
Reading Teacher
Toccoa, GA

Jean Flemion
Physical Education Teacher
Calabasas, CA

Debbie Rusiski
School Bus Driver
Gilbert, AZ



Sam Carcione
University Professor
Washington, DC



And we're not alone. We share these interests with the more than 2 million teachers, higher education faculty and education support personnel who belong to the National Education Association (NEA). We're concerned about these issues because it's our job to prepare the nation's children for tomorrow.

But doing our job today requires a real commitment from outside as well as inside the classroom. It's critical that our elected officials understand the many issues, from poor nutrition to violence in school, that threaten the welfare of our children—and our country. As education employees, we want to make sure our views are heard.

That's why we contribute to NEA's Political Action Committee (NEA-PAC). Working together with other concerned educators, we strengthen our role in the political process. We combine our resources to support candidates and elected officials who believe that investing in quality education is an investment in America's future. As members of NEA-PAC, our message is clear and focused where it counts.

Sure our interests are special, but if we don't speak out to protect them, who will?

Political Action Committees: Our Choice for a Stronger Voice.

Paid for by the National Education Association Political Action Committee

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